Monday, December 31, 2007 | Inquirer | Vol. 11 / No. 11 | P10

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED [illegible]. PEARLESS VIEWS

CAT'S PRIZED CATCH 2008 is the Year of the Rat, which begins the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. According to legend, the Rat came to age won a race among the animals heading over the border Ox and the Horse simply by being clever. The Rat jumped on the back of the Ox and jumped off its head before it could cross the finish line. Those born in the Year of the Rat are quick-witted and discerning but tend to be greedy.

Ping stands in Erap way

Lacson says definitely he will run

By Cliff C. Cabucungan Jr.

SEN. PANFILO LACSON HAS expressed his intention to seek the country's highest elective post in 2010, putting him on a collision course with three other opposition leaders who have made known their plans to run for president—Senate President Manuel Villar, Sen. Mar Roxas and deposed President Joseph Estrada.

"My own decision to run in 2010 will depend on three considerations—desire, means and opportunity. If you ask me if I have the intention, the answer is yes," Lacson said yesterday.

He said he would "definitely go for it" should "all three pressure themselves

PHOTO STORIES A4

SAFE BUT SOUND Made of cardboard and plastic, these nine lions said along a sidewalk of Curtiente Street, Manila, and all throughout the country for that matter, can round off with all your resolutions but don't be left [illegible] and we embrace a brand new year, and yes keep you safe and sound.

Trillanes caper tops inquirer.net most read stories; Dollywood No. 1 column

THE ROWDY STAGE-5F SEN. ANTONIO Trillanes IV, a former Navy lieutenant, at the Peninsula Manila hotel in Makati on Nov. 29 and the Chinese teen who killed himself when a fitted dish turned out to be unattractive topped this year's Most Read Stories on Inquirer.net.

Dollywood, which reports on the dailiness in entertainment and show business world, emerged as the Most Read Column in 2007.

The Top 10 Overall Most Read Stories and Top 10 Overall Columns on inquirer.net for 2007:

1. Trillanes, 116 arrested, Makati standoff ends (Nov 29, 2007)

2. Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim seized the Peninsula Manila hotel and held it for seven hours to demand the resignation of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Trillanes and his group of renegade soldiers surrounded the hotel, threw tear gas and drove an armored personnel carrier into the lobby to prepositions for an assault. The standoff was preceded by a walk-out by the Trillanes group from a court hearing where they were being tried for their involvement in

TRILLANES 6A

Pray for, be kind to all God's animals, Church urged

By Tina G. Salazar

TO MARK THE NEW YEAR WITH A compassionate eye for animals, animal welfare groups have appealed to members of the Catholic Church.

After all, they reason, animals were the only ones with the Holy Family when Jesus was born in a manger.

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), the Animal Welfare Coalition (an umbrella organization of 21 groups nationwide and two groups from the United Kingdom) and the Philippine Animal Welfare Society (Pawis) are calling on Catholic bishops and priests to include compassion for animals in their New Year homilies to the faithful.

The animal welfare groups stress that people should relate

PRAY FOR 6A

At last, House goes hi-tech with biometrics

By Christian V. Esguerra

WHEN MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives return to work four weeks from now, they'll be in for a "hi-tech" reception.

The House leadership is installing equipment for "biometric voting" to replace the traditional means by which

BY LAWS! A4

Filipino healing priest does so 'many miracles like in Bible'

By Ma. Caren P. Days

HE COULD NOT BELIEVE HIS healing power. He wanted to run away from it.

A Canadian woman declared dead eight hours earlier, but regains reading to her resident said stunned, suddenly opened her eyes after Filipino priest Fr. Fernando Suarez prayed over her.

Suarez, who was also a paramedic, was stunned. "Let me out of here," was all he could say readers Sun.

He was supposed to go and see the woman earlier but he was not able to make it in time. When he arrived at the Ottawa Civic Hospital in Canada, it seemed too late. But Suarez went to see her anyway and, surrounded by doctors whom he requested to be present, he prayed over the woman.

The miracle happened.

The woman is now well, Suarez says, and has resumed her normal life.

That case, which happened almost nine years ago, is probably the most stunning of all, Fr. Suarez

FILIPINO A10

SUAREZ: The gift has been with him for more than 20 years.

Word power opens doors for poor boy

By Kristine L. Alave

AT 11, MATTHEW MALTAO looks small for his age—he can easily pass for an eight-year-old—but he knows more words than college students normally would and has enough atoms to his linguistic arsenal to ship grants in the Scrabble world.

His favorite words are: dentist and equinox, among other terms

WORD 1A4

Doronila regrets offending Manalo son in column

INQUIRER COLUMNIST AMAN Doronila wrote that expressed regret that he offended Eduardo E. Manalo, son of Iglesia ni Cristo head Bishop Eraño Manalo, when he said in a Dec. 1 article on May 7, 2003, that the authorities had identified the hotel rooms and suites in which several people, including the younger Manalo, had reportedly met during the three days of the "Tel-

DORONILA 6A

Bhutto's son seen as too young to be mother's successor

ISLAMABAD—BENAZIR BHUTto's party was in disarray tantamount to the slain Pakistani opposition leader on Sunday and decide whether to contest an election due in Jan. 8 or wait a week, as controversy swirled about just how Bhutto died.

Without the charismatic Bhutto, 54, whose family dynasty's history is intertwined with Pakistan's, her party is in disarray.

Bhutto's 19-year-old son, Bilawal, is to read her will on Monday but even if it names him as her political successor, the Oxford law student is seen as too young to immediately lead, and her widower Asif Ali Zardari would likely be the de facto chief.

Otherwise, the choice of a successor most likely lies between Zardari, and her top aide, Makhdoom Amin Fahim.

Bhutto's husband Zardari can seize charm, and gained respect for enduring eight years in jail before being released without being convicted. However, political foes accuse him of corruption and some loyalists in Bhutto's party, the Pakistan People's Party, blame him for tearing together Bhutto easier.

Many PPP leaders say from Bhutto's hard-winning feudal class, yet the party also has a big

BHUTTO A2

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/23
13 28
SUERTRES
9 3 6 | 9 2 7
SUPERLOTTO 6/49
13 25 38 29 45 42
₱50,468,706.00

2 more prison officials suspended

Told to reply to charges in connection with Jalosjos escape

By Lala Salaverria

THE ESCAPE OF CONVICTED child rapist Romeo Jalosjos has claimed more official casualties as the justice department has placed on the head of the New Bilibid Prisons and southern Bureau of Corrections (BuCor) official under preventive suspension for 90 days.

NHP Supt. Jaime Leopando and Rosalyn Diaz, chief of the BuCor's administrative division, were also asked to answer in writing in 72 hours the charges of dishonesty and grave misconduct or neglect in the performance of duty against them, according to Justice Undersecretary Ricardo Encinedo Jr.

The charges are punishable with removal from the service.

Encinedo said the charge sheet and preventive suspension orders were issued on the instructions of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. They were transmitted to the offices of Leopando and Diaz last Saturday, with immediate effect. The two are to be replaced by their deputies or those second in command.

Encinedo said preventive suspension was not a penalty yet, and the investigation of Leopando and Diaz would continue.

He said the orders were issued only on Saturday because the DOJ had to check the documentary evidence of Jalosjos' escape.

BuCor Director Ricardo Siapar was ordered and replaced by retired national police chief Oscar Calderon after Jalosjos escaped.

In the charge sheet against Leopando signed by Encinedo, the NHP chief was accused of signing or issuing on Dec. 16 a release order in favor of Jalosjos, despite the fact that he'd yet to have more than a request pending before the justice department asking for guidance on the recomputation of Jalosjos' good conduct time allowance.

It said that the Department of Justice had recalled the release order on Dec. 19, but that the order was released to the media which enabled the former congressman from Zamboanga del Norte to walk out of jail a free man on Dec. 22.

"There was subsequently the precipitate and unauthorized leakage of the order to the media which created confusion and undermined the confidence in a critical pillar of the criminal justice system, and the eventual escape of inmate Romeo Jalosjos from the New Bilibid Prisons," the charge sheet stated.

The charge sheet against Diaz narrated the same facts and also stated that it was she who had custody of Bucor records and documents, particularly the release order on Jalosjos.

In a phone interview, Encinedo said that before a release order can be issued, it has to be backed by a memorandum from the BuCor stating that relevant documents supporting the release were being issued.

RIZAL DAY RITES
President Macapagal-Arroyo marches with Armed Forces chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon during yesterday's observance of the 111th year of martyrdom of the country's national hero, Dr. Jose P. Rizal, in San Fernando, La Union.

QUESTION FROM PEASANTS

What gains is Palparan talking about?

By TJ Burgonio

A MILITANT PEASANT group yesterday decried retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan for saying the tycoons had been remiss in reporting the gains of his anti-insurgency campaign when he was in the military service.

"What good results is Palparan talking about? Everywhere he goes all the results he gives are more human rights abuses, torture, abductions and killings," said Rafael Mariano Mariello, national deputy secretary of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

"As he is saying it is all right to commit all those atrocities as he (can Free businessmen and local government units from so-called communist control?" Mariello said.

Palparan, portrayed by the Left as a "butcher" responsible for abductions and killing activists in areas where he had been assigned, retired from the Armed Forces of the Philippines this year. He is now a consultant to administration-allied Rep. Prospero Nograles of Davao.

In an Inquirer story last week, Palparan complained the newspaper focused mainly on his alleged violations of human rights instead of the gains made by his campaign against communist insurgents.

He voiced his disappointment with the paper after the Court of Appeals issued a writ of amparo in favor of brothers Raymond and Reynaldo Manalo, who had alleged that they were abducted and detained by Palparan and his troops for 18 months in Bulacan, Nueva Ecija and Pampanga.

The human rights group Karapatan has counted 867 victims of extrajudicial killings, including 395 militants, from 2001 to the present.

KMP accused the media, including the Inquirer, for exposing human rights violations "at best they can."

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- **TOUGHER JAIL** term on election violence OK'd /A3
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- **LIM MOVED** back to PNP jail /A5

DECEMBER IS NATIONAL ENERGY CONSCIOUSNESS MONTH

HUWAG HAYAAANG IKAW ANG PINAPANOOD NG TELEBISYON.

UGALING I-OFF ITO KUNG MAY IBANG GINAGAWA AT HINDI RIN LANG NANONOOD NITO.

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		Tilapia	₱60-80
Regular Well Milled	₱20-25	Galunggong	₱80-120
Well Milled Rice	₱22-28	Kamatis	₱40-60
		Pechay	₱25-45
		Sitaw	₱45-60
		Talong	₱29-60

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Watching fireworks? Here's what to do

TO PROTECT YOUR EYE sights, just watch the fireworks from a distance.

Eye specialist Dr Jack Arroyo issued this advice at Philippine Airlines' celebration of the New Year with the hang and lights of fireworks displays.

Arroyo, president of the American Eye Center, in a statement Saturday said that families who will be watching the New Year country on Dec. 31 should just watch the fireworks displays from afar because they could cause injuries to the pound or possible damage.

He warned that wearing prescription glasses provide little protection against a number of eye injuries which could possibly be caused by fireworks.

Arroyo said fireworks, which handled closely by non-professionals, expose the eye to toxic fumes, chemicals and flying debris.

He said among the most common fireworks-related eye injuries are contusion-corneal, traumatic iritis, eyelid lacerations, orbital fractures and retinal abrasions.

Also thermal injuries can be caused by the ultraviolet light of fireworks. But the worst possible danger, he added, is a ruptured eyeball.

Beverly T. Mendoza

Bill setting 20-year jail term on poll violence approved

By Christine F. Esguerra

CAN A NEW 20-YEAR PRISON term finally discourage politicians from employing violence to win elections?

No one can really tell, but a new bill passed on third and final reading by the House of Representatives shortly before its holiday break hopes to do the trick.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman's House Bill No. 3863 packs up to a maximum of 20 years of prison the offenses "attended by violence, coercion, intimidation, force, or threat," especially equivalent to prison accepted under the Revised Penal Code.

"The employment of violence is the most brutal and undermines the will of the electorate, eliminating poll rivals and silencing witnesses," Lagman said in a statement.

"The use of violence or terrorism does not only tamper with election results, it destroys the manner and spirit of the electoral process."

Consolidated with two originated bills filed by Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, the measure also punishes political parties, including party-list groups, whose member would be found guilty of the offense.

The penalty increases the current fine of P10,000 to a minimum of P500,000.

On top of the fine, the offender will be disqualified perpetually from holding public office and will no longer be allowed to run for one.

Lagman said his measure also "provides for the separate and consecutive prosecution of a person accused of an election offense or prohibited act under the Omnibus Election Code whose act or acts likewise constitute a felony under the Revised Penal Code."

Lagman said the importance of his passage had been "overshadowed" by more controversial measures that prosecuted media reports around the impeachment complaint.

"Weeks before the break, the Pacu was on the passage of the Cheaper Medicines Bill, which promised to dramatically lower the prices of drugs sold here.

Our strategy was "parallel preparation," a cadinal feature of the versions of the bill in the Senate and in the lower chamber.

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Panasonic ideas for life

Palace: It's still too early to pick bet for 2010 polls

By Christine O. Avendaño

SERGIO APOSTOL, CHIEF PRESIdential legal counsel, yesterday said that it was still "too early" for the Arroyo administration to discuss its standard bearer for the 2010 presidential election.

"The President is not even talking politics," Apostol said.

But he said that the ruling administrative coalition, Lakas-CMD, would hold a meeting in the second week of January "to start exploring who will be our candidate" for 2010.

Tiu-early among the possible presidential candidates in Lakas are Ronni Bernardo, head of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, and Quezon City Mayor Jose Belmonte, according to Apostol.

Among administrative allies, those who could run for president are Vice President Noli de Castro and Sen. Richard Gordon, the President's chief legal counsel said.

The Lakas meeting will be presided over by Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr., coalition president. Apostol said President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Lakas chair emeritus, "could" join the meeting.

Apostol said deposed President Joseph Estrada could not seek the presidency because the Constitution prohibits ex-elected presidents from seeking the same post again.

Apostol said Estrada probably thought he could run again because the presidential position got on his restored his political rights.

Ms Arroyo's restored said that this position was an accumulation of one.

Ping stands in Erap way, will definitely go for it

Front page 6-1

LOVE, ALWAYS, ERAP That is what's written on the bags of goodies that ex-President Estrada has been distributing in a heap of gift-giving the past days to the city's poor areas like Tondo, as Sunday. [illegible]

LACSON: I'm not the spoiler

"The opposition should unite behind one bet to ensure triumph it looks hard. Cory (Aquino) became the unified opposition bet to defeat Marcos. Otherwise, Erap (Estrada) would probably sacrifice his own popularity and plunge more into a convictions political life," said Pimentel in a text message to the Inquirer.

Estrada, who was convicted of plunder in September, claimed that he could run again for president because his political rights were restored when President Macapagal-Arroyo proclaimed him in October.

He went on presidency that ousted in the middle of 1998 was not short by people power in January 2001.

An election lawyer and a poll commissioner believe that Estrada as a former president is barred from running for another term, but former Commissioners Manolo, an UNO leader, said it would be up to the Supreme Court to decide the matter. Web reports from and Christine G. Avendaño in Manila and Joey A. Gallardo, Inquirer Visayas

What's Binay doing in Tacloban?

By Joey A. Gallardo
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—IS MAKATI City Mayor Jejomar Binay starting to test the political waters for the presidential race in 2010?

Political observers raised this question after Binay and his staff gave indications that his task here yesterday was not just to take part in the city's commemoration of Jose Rizal's martyrdom.

Binay, interviewed by reporters here, played it coy on his political plans for 2010 but dropped hints that local officials like him could very well serve the whole country.

Binay, an invited guest at the program to commemorate the 111th death anniversary of the country's national hero, said the question was premature. He was still "too far off" for him to really consider it seriously.

"There is time for that," Binay said, when asked his plans three years from now.

He, however, was quick to say that his stay here and to other parts of the country had nothing to do with the 2010 presidential election.

Binay said his visits to places outside Makati were by virtue of the invitations that he had received and his involvement in different organizations like the Rotary Club and the Boys Scouts of the Philippines, of which he is the national president.

Binay was interviewed in this city by former Tacloban mayor Alfredo "Bejo" Romualdez and the current officer in charge, Sergio Romualdez.

At last, House goes hi-tech with biometric voting in next session

Front page 6-1

the country's 240 representatives. Even cast their votes on process of legislation.

The technology, already nearly commonplace in many parliaments elsewhere, will allow lawmakers to vote by simply pressing the buttons "yes," "no" or "abstain," according to Deputy Minority Leader Rolin Godoy.

The vote will later be verified using the individual fingerprints of the members of the House. The results will be flashed on a screen to be installed at the plenary hall.

Speed and accuracy

Godoy said the same technology would be used during roll call, a procedure that often are up valuable minutes of plenary work.

"The beauty of this new technology is to tie speed and accuracy," the Pantaleon lawmaker told the Inquirer.

Biometrics refers to "automated methods of recognizing a person based on a physiological or behavioral characteristic," says the website of the US-based The Biometric Consortium.

"Biometric technologies are becoming the foundation of an innovative array of highly secure identification and personal verification solutions," the consortium said.

Fingerprint scanner

"As the level of security breaches and transaction fraud increases, the need for highly secure identification and personal verification technologies is becoming apparent," it said.

In the case of the House of Representatives, each of the gadgets, which would go with a fingerprint scanner, will be located on every lawmaker's cable at the session hall.

The installation was the reason the House leadership decided to move the resumption of legislative work from Jan. 21 to Jan. 28.

Godoy said the biometric voting system, reportedly costing P35 million, would be put to better use during voting on third reading.

Speeches

At this stage, he noted that, the members "scattered" respectively use sometimes to aid resources—was often long and arduous because each of the lawmakers had the option to explain his or her vote.

The problem with said, passed voting was also apparent in the 13th Congress when the majority in the chamber voted to kill two impeachment complaints against President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Many of the members of the House then spent a significant amount of time delivering impassioned speeches to explain their votes.

To me, the new system is very convenient considering that we ate a very large body with 240 members," Godoy said. "It will save the problem with accuracy."

With the coming of new technology to the lower house, the Inquirer body would appreciably avoid to respond to the biometric voting system in its rules.

Word power opens doors for poor boy through Scrabble tournaments

Front page 6-1

POOR BOY ENRICHED BY WORDS Matthew Medina memorizes the dictionary and the World List every day. He lives in a depressed area in Quezon City but dreams of getting out with his family by becoming a professional scrabble player.

that do not appear in online dictionaries but are accepted in Scrabble in competitions, he usually plays the game standing up as he could reach across the table and place tiles on the farthest side of the board.

The National champion for Scrabble in the Philippines (Duropi) currently rests Matthew, son of a tricycle driver playing a tournament area in Quezon City, as the No. 2 Filipino player under the age of 17. He ranks just below another QC-based tournament, Lucan de Guzman, 16.

Somewhere happy

In an interview with the Inquirer, Matthew said the game simply takes him to somewhere "happy," where letters "swim" in front of his eyes and words may not always be high scoring, but he said he likes them because they are "deep."

Among the words Matthew played during his last tournament—the 1st Philippine Scrabble Open held at the SM Megamall from Dec. 27 to 29—were "bowtie," "droppers," "refluence," and "tzatziki."

Matthew actually lost almost half of his 13 games, but emerged strongly back in the final rounds to win the championship.

Matthew's mother, Rosalie, said her son started playing Scrabble at home during the two-day competition in his considered a "killer" player at his age and somebody to be reckoned with a few years from now.

Rosalie proudly said that Matthew could have topped the World Youth Tournament held in Malaysia in September had he been able to compete there. (The boy was still not to go on his first-ever overseas trip but it was canceled because of lack of funds.)

The energetic word wonder, who started to play Scrabble at age 8, managed to build a staggering vocabulary while growing up to a poor neighborhood in Barangay Mangahan in Commonwealth, Quezon City.

Healthy appetite for words

Matthew is a math grader at Luis Elementary School, where 34-year-old Toni, who is another Scrabble whiz, goes to Commonwealth High School.

Their father Jun Medina is a tricycle driver, mother Shirley tends a small sari-sari store.

He was introduced to Scrabble in Barangay Mangahan when it held a Scrabble contest three years ago.

The couple observed that their two kids' lunary appetite for words has not only made them formidable competitors, but they started playing the game, the Medina siblings have sharply improved their grades in school, their parents said.

Matthew was in the lowest section when he enrolled in Grade I. Five years later, he has not only landed in the top section but has skyrocketed the honor roll.

"(Matthew's) spelling and English-speaking skills improved. He's now best in English. On his class," screaming as his father, himself a Scrabble enthusiast.

"And when he comes home from school, it's all Scrabble," the father said. When not playing against each other, Matthew and Toni can be found leafing through either "The Word List" (a bible for words accepted in Scrabble) or a thick dictionary in their spare time.

London, here they come

The Medina siblings said they were to qualify for the next Youth Tournament in London in 2008.

But dreaming beyond that goal, Matthew, who also wants to be a jeepney, said he hopes that by winning future Scrabble tournaments as a "professional" he could add to the family's earnings.

For now, his parents are thankful that their kids are finished on something worthwhile. Scrabble, they said, has nurtured their children's ambition.

In its last week's Open, though, both father and son admitted it was not Matthew's time to win big just yet.

"Minsan dun yung pinag-aralan (He apparently woke up on the wrong side of the bed)," the elder Medina said, noting how his son repeatedly drew "useless" tiles and couldn't get enough pieces for long, interlocking plays in the 4 games he scored.

Matthew then lost a close match against 10-year-old Gerson Anthonee Jesus Cetin. He said he "misplaced" a "u" (in that allowed Anthonee to form "tuq" and win by a mere 13-point margin.

Killer on square board

Antonio conceded after the match, though, that Matthew was a tough opponent who just had to speak of "bad luck." He said Matthew's performance is now "star" as his last match—instead of making another play that could have formed "tuf"—went on opening for Anthonee's winning "tuq."

Before last week's tournament, Matthew had already secured a respectable 72nd spot out of the over 250 players ranked by Smorgy nationwide covering all age groups.

And this "killer" on the square board is just warming up.

Karapatan: AFP liable for couple's abduction

By TJ Burgonio

WHILE IT HAS RELEASED them, the military should be held liable for the abducting and illegally detaining activist couple Manuel Pajarito and Juliet Fernandez, a human rights group said yesterday.

"We would like them to be prosecuted. It's not the policy of the state to abduct people," said Karapatan deputy secretary general Jigi Clamor in a phone interview.

"This is the opposite of what Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo has been saying that the state is to advocate human rights abuses. We challenge CIDG to prosecute them and other officials guilty of such crimes," Clamor said.

Pajarito and Fernandez were among the 180 victims of (alleged) disappearances since 2001, according to Karapatan.

The Philippine Army's 82nd Infantry Battalion presented the couple to the press last Wednesday to help to disprove they were killed following their arrest by soldiers on May 13 this year at a check point in Pinabacdao, Samar.

The couple were suspected members of the New People's Army.

Clamor said the military was liable for holding Pajarito and Fernandez since it never filed a case against them.

"We have no report the military filed a case against the couple. That's illegal detention. If it had a case against them, it should have turned them over to the police for the filing of charges and detention," he said.

"They should be held accountable for their acts, especially because Juliet Fernandez was pregnant when they were abducted," he said.

Karapatan cannot file charges on its own but would support any case to be filed by the couple, Clamor said.

"If they would like to pursue a case, we will support them," he said. Karapatan has yet to contact the couple, however.

Lim brought back to PNP jail in Crame amid heavy security

By Nikko Dizon

FORMER ECOTT MANGUDO commander Army Brig. Gen. Eduardo Lim, was brought back yesterday to the Philippine National Police (PNP) Custodial Center under heavy security.

The move follows a Makati City court's reconsideration order issued last Friday after the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) took custody of him last week.

Lim was turned over by the AFP to the PNP Custodial Center at around 12 noon, police and military spokespersons told the reporters in separate interviews.

A composite team made up of some 50 military escorts drawn in full battle gear received Lim as he was moved from the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp) in Camp Aguinaldo to Camp Crame just across Edsa in Quezon City.

Lt. Col. Ilac Basaron, AFP spokesperson, confirmed the heavy security.

Lim's transfer assuaged him with fellow Manila Peninsula defendants, Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and the Magdalo junior officers, who renewed their call for the ouster of President Arroyo at the park Makati City hotel last Nov. 29.

Last Thursday, Lim was brought back to Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal where he was temporarily detained pending the resolution of his motion for reconsideration of Judge Elmo Alameda's order, the request of the Army officer had barely stayed a day in Tanay when AFP chief of staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. ordered his transfer to the high security facility.

Esperon cited the request of the AFP Provost Marshal General to have Lim detained at Camp Aguinaldo to expedite the investigation proceedings the military was conducting on the Nov. 29 incident, which the military chief had branded as a "power grab" attempt.

Keep kids away from piccolo, DOH warns

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SMALL FIRECRACKER PIC-colo popular with children apparently packs a mean wallop, prompting the Department of Health to issue a public warning against the said pyrotechnic which it said should be banned for being dangerous and illegal.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III called on people, especially parents, to keep their children away from the piccolo.

"Small in size and called firecracker lightest like a matchstick, the piccolo was the most common type of firecracker that caused most of the injuries reported to the DOH so far.

It has also led to more firecracker-related injuries to children aged 14 years and below since Dec. 25, according to Duque, who expressed concern that the piccolo is popular with children and is sold cheaply, at P10 per box.

"Piccolo has caused more injuries than any other firecracker we remembered. Since this year, ahead of the New Year's celebration unless more fireworks are found to suffer more injuries," Duque said in a statement.

He cited statistics from the National Epidemiology Center (NEC) from Dec. 23 to 26 showing that the piccolo was the number one cause of firecracker and firecracker-related injuries for those 10 years old and below, causing 20 percent of such injuries. Of the said injuries, 72 percent were blast wounds or burns, while 28 percent were eye injuries.

NEC Director Eric Tayag also said the piccolo had its 910 share of victims last year, with 119 recorded injuries.

Duque called on those who had bought the piccolo to dispose of them by placing them in a plastic bag and dousing it with water to render the firecrackers inoperative.

'Fire or be fired'

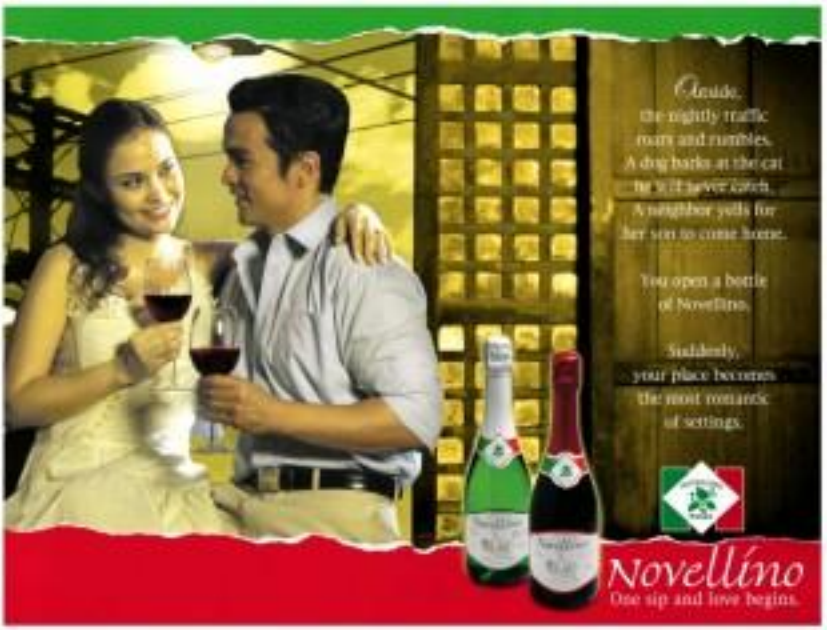
FIRE YOUR GUNS indiscriminately or be fired.

Philippine National Police (PNP) Chief Director General Avelino Razon yesterday warned policemen nationwide not to fire their guns to celebrate the New Year or risk being dismissed from the force.

Razon told the troopers that the same warning applies to members of the armed forces. He said he had already coordinated with Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. so cases of soldiers caught firing their guns.

"Fire or be fired. This applies nationwide to all our police personnel and members of the military. If they fire their guns, they will be dismissed," Razon stressed.

Razon also warned policemen not to fight illegal firecrackers. "They are not supposed to be fighting illegal firecrackers." Alcuin Papa



Bhutto's son, husband hold key to legacy

ISLAMABAD—THE SON AND husband of Benazir Bhutto are among the main contenders for the leadership of the Islamic party, which is likely to be destined Sunday.

A senior aide to Bhutto said the former premier's son was not keen to enter politics yet, leading to speculation that her widower, Asif Ali Zardari, could effectively take charge of the party until he is older.

Whatever the outcome, both will remain key figures in the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) founded four decades ago by Bhutto's father and now the victim but the country's biggest opposition party.

His mother's son

At just 19, the mantle of the Bhutto family's Machiavellian legacy would be heavy on the head of Benazir's only son, Bilawal.

It piled for the top slot in the PPP he would be the third head or in its history after his mother and his grandfather, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who founded the party and was executed under martial law in 1979.

But he has already shown signs of following in his mother's footsteps, enrolling earlier this year at Oxford University, where Benazir Bhutto was head of the prestigious Oxford Union debating society.

Bilawal—meaning one without equals—was born in September 1988, a month before his mother won general elections under military dictator Zia-ul-Haq to become Pakistan's first female premier.

"I went back to sleep and woke up to the sound of a congratulatory gunshot being fired outside the hospital, the booming of drums and cries of 'Jiye (Long Live) Bhutto.' The most celebrated and politically controversial baby in the history of Pakistan had been born," Bhutto said in her autobiography.

He said his two sisters were into exile with their mother in 1999, dividing their time between London and Dubai, where Bilawal attended school. Reports in local newspapers said he was keen on outdoor sports including target-shooting and horse riding.

Too young

At Benazir's funeral on Friday he was pictured looking composed despite his grief, but analysts say he is currently too young to lead the party.

"Bilawal is just 19 years old, he needs to be groomed," political analyst and retired general Talat Masood said.

"They should let him complete his education. When he is in a position to assume he should be given the mantle."

Pakistanis call "Sir Technical" by Pakistanis because of allegations about kickbacks from his wife's time in power, Asif Ali Zardari, 53, has gone from playboy to villain and now to grieving political widower.

Polo-playing scion

While he married into the Bhutto political dynasty in 1987, Zardari, then 31, was the little known scion of a landowning polo-playing family from southern Sindh province.

He was born on July 11, 1955, in the rural Sindh district of Nawabshah and schooled in the commercial capital Karachi at the Saint Patrick High School, alma mater of President Pervez Musharraf.

He graduated from the Sindh Cadet College in 1972, an army-run institution known for its discipline and regimentation.

After their arranged marriage, Zardari gradually carved out an influential position for himself under his wife's two tenures in power.

8 years in jail

But he was back behind bars within half an hour of the dismissal of Bhutto's second government in 1996.

Locked upon night years in jail—five of them while his then wife was premier. In cases—before being freed in November 2004 after being cleared over the last of 17 cases of corruption, murder and drug smuggling.

His passion for thoroughbred horses was well known and landed him into trouble. One of the charges against him was that he maintained a costly stable in the prime minister's official residence in Islamabad at state expense.

"Zardari has a very tainted record. He may not consider himself suitable for the party leadership," Masood said.

"He may leave it to some senior member to lead the party. It will be more appropriate for the party and for him." AFP

Bhutto's son seen as too young to be mother's successor

From page A1

following among the poor.

The party leadership, due to start in Bhutto's home town of Nawabshah in southern Pakistan—also where she will in to be mad Sunday after noon—must decide as well whether to contest the election if it goes ahead.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's opposition party has said it would boycott the election and has been trying to convince Bhutto's PPP to do likewise.

However, a senior official of the former ruling party said an election due in little over a week was likely to be delayed.

"I would more than likely that election will be delayed," Tariq Azim Khan, a senior official of the Pakistan Muslim League party, said.

The party backs President Pervez Musharraf and ruled until a caretaker government was set up last month.

Khan said he expected a six-to-eight-week post-poponed.

He said the party had suspended election campaigning for the Assembly parliamentary vote. "We have suspended our campaign because of the prevailing situation," he said.

So far the government has not announced any decision to call off or postpone the vote, but the Election Commission said it was planning an emergency meeting on Monday.

"They should postpone the election, as a mark of respect," Tariq Nazim, 50, an accountant in Islamabad, said on Sunday on his way to church.

"I think it's crucial elections are held. They are essential for democracy itself and the integrity of Pakistan. But a delay is inevitable," said Yasmi, among the 2 percent of Pakistanis who are Christian in the overwhelmingly Islamic nation.

KEY FIGURES IN SUCCESSION: Benazir Bhutto's widower Asif Ali Zardari (left) and their son Bilawal, an Oxford law student are photographed at the family mausoleum during the former prime minister's funeral on Friday.

Anger at Musharraf

Bhutto's assassination in a suicide attack on Thursday has stoked violence and protests in to doubt the Jan. 8 election, deepening the crisis in the important US ally against terrorism as it struggles to recover from military rule.

Anger against Musharraf burst strongly among Bhutto supporters. Since her death (See related story on Page A10) sporadic violence has erupted, burning bars about southern central Pakistan's middle.

The death toll from the violence has reached 47.

But streets in Karachi, site of much of the violence, were generally quiet and deserted on Sunday, witnesses said, although a clashed man was burned to death when a petrol station in the city was set on fire.

Bhutto's PPP has dismissed the government statement that al-Qaeda killed her, saying Musharraf's embattled administration was trying to cover up its failure to protect her.

Although US President George W. Bush has urged Pakistanis to hold the vote, a White House spokesperson said it was for Pakistan's authorities to determine the timing.

US hopes wrecked

Washington had encouraged Bhutto, who was liberal by Pakistan's standards and an opponent of Islamic militancy. She returned home from self-imposed exile in October, hoping to become prime minister for the third time.

Her death wrecked US hopes of a power-sharing deal between her and Musharraf, who took power in a military coup in 1999 but left the Army last month to become a civilian president.

'Ludicrous' death theory

A close aide who prepared Bhutto's body for burial dismissed as "ludicrous" a government theory she died after hitting her head on a sunroof during the suicide attack. A party spokesperson said she was shot in the head.

A Pakistani television channel broadcast on Sunday grainy still pictures of what it said appeared to be two men who attacked and killed Bhutto, one firing a pistol.

Interior Ministry spokesperson Javed Iqbal Cheema said the government's version was based on a medical report and other evidence collected from the scene of the attack.

"If the People's Party's leadership wants, the body can be exhumed and post-mortemed. They are most welcome," he added.

'We don't strike women'

The PPP has said the government cannot also frame "hand" evidence al-Qaida is to blame. The accused al-Qaeda-linked militants have denied any role. A spokesperson for militant leader Baitullah Mehsud said: "We don't strike women."

Other militants, however, issued threats against Bhutto when she returned in October, and her triumphal entry into Karachi was met with a suicide attack that killed at least 140 people.

Although only experts on Monday suggested the country was relatively quiet after the previous days' violence, two suspected suicide bombers were killed in central Punjab province when the devices they carried exploded prematurely in an apparent botched attack on a former ministers police said.

Police officer Muhammad Nishamma' Ejaz-ul-Haq, a former religious affairs minister in Musharraf's government who had earlier been staying at a house 200 meters away from the site of the blast, was the intended target.

In Karachi on Sunday, hotel association manager Khalil memorials was for an end to the strife that has wrecked the country.

"Every six months there's a problem here. Most Pakistanis would like to work outside the country. There are blasts, retours, no work!" Reuters

Trillanes caper tops inquirer.net most read stories; Dollywood No. 1 column

From page A1

the tallest July 2003 coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny.

3. Chinese sex kills self when blind date turns ugly (Dec. 5, 2007)

4. 17-year-old boy in motorcycle-Chito was to chopped-off head found on a remote in the mountains but he hanged himself after seeing her face-to-face.

5. June 2007 nursing board exam results out (Aug. 26, 2007)

The results of June 2007 nursing licensure exams are finally released. Some 80,000 nursing graduates took the exams, including those who had taken and passed the June 2006 exams but elected to retake them to remove the stigma that they benefited from the leak of test questions in the previous year. The June 2006 results, which a highly controversial when a substantial portion of the questions was leaked to examinees reviewing at several review centers around the country. The controversy led to a Senate inquiry. The filing of court cases and frenzy reached the United States where Commission on Enrollment of Foreign Nursing Schools said no passers of the tainted 2006 exams would be considered for hiring in the United States. Leonor Rivera-Tripon, chair of the Professional Regulations Commission, said the 2007 exams would "bring closure" to the test leak scandal of the June 2006 nursing licensure examinations.

6. Mall bomb blast kills 8, hurts more than 100 (Oct. 19, 2007)

On Oct. 19, 2007, an explosion ripped through the Glorietta 2 shopping mall in Makati. Eight people died instantly. The final body count was 11. Initially there were suspicions that it was a corrosive attack. But Philippine National Police investigators eventually found that it was an accidental gas explosion, a finding that was disputed by the mall's owners, the Ayala Land Inc. On Dec. 23, the DOJ announced that it would reverse its final report and exonerate it with an initial report submitted by Ayala Land.

7. 98% pass nursing exams (Aug. 20, 2007)

A graduate of Our Lady of Fatima University-Valenzuela topped the nursing board licensure exams conducted in June 2007 by the Professional Regulation Commission's Board of Nursing in Manila, Baguio, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu, Davao, Iloilo, Legazpi, Lucena, Tacloban, Zamboanga and Zamboanga (Sibugay). Of the 64,389 takers, who included first-timers, repeaters and voluntary "retakers," 31,275, or 48 percent, passed.

8. Cloudy skies may block 3D view of lunar eclipse on Wednesday (Aug. 27, 2007)

A total lunar eclipse occurred on Aug. 28, but Filipinos' view of the eclipse was obscured by clouds.

9. Estrada guilty of plunder; perjury rap dropped (Sept. 12, 2007)

On Sept. 12, deposed President Joseph Estrada was found guilty of plunder by the Sandiganbayan's special court and sentenced up to 40 years in prison. The court ordered the forfeiture of cash and property belonging to Estrada which represented the illegal gambling bribes that he collected amounting to P545.29 million with interest, including the P200 million deposited in the name of the Erap Muslim Youth Foundation; the P189-million commission Estrada received from the purchase of Belle Corp. shares on his orders by then-Tax president Jaime Dichaves that ended up in his account using the 'Jose Velarde' alias, and the 3,192,818 sq.m. so-called "Boracay Mansion" in New Manila, Quezon City.

10. Bomb rocks Congress; action among 4 killed (Nov. 14, 2007)

A bomb explosion rocked the south wing driveway of the Batasan complex, killing three people, including Basilan Rep. Nebah Mihtar, and wounding eight others, four of them also legislators. Three of the injured lawmakers died in the hospital. The initial police investigation showed Akbar, 47, a former governor of Basilan province, to have been the target of what may have been an assassination. The explosion was shown to have been caused by a bomb planted near the entrance of the Batasan south wing, which was detonated by a cellular phone.

8. Pimentel son on embattled Mahar 'Enrile' (Sept. 18, 2007)

Lawmar Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III used a feature in Quezon City to accuse Commission on Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos of having "masterminded" the alleged cheating in the May 2007 elections in which he lost his senatorial bid. Pimentel said the controversy hounding Abalos in the allegedly irregular national broadband network project was his "karma."

20. 'IT' earning board results say vs league (Nov. 28, 2007)

A member of the Board of Nursing said the results of the June 2007 nursing licensure examinations would be released in August, as a result later than the announcement of results of past tests, explaining that the month's delay was primarily due to the volume of examinees this year.

Top 10 Overall Columns

1. Dollywood by Dolly Anne Carvajal, published in the Entertainment section.

2. On Target by Ramon Tulfo, published in the Metro section on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

3. Editorial, appearing daily in the Opinion section.

4. Bare Eye by Beside Winfield, published in the Sports section on Mondays and Wednesdays.

5. Wordwide, by Nestor Torre in the Entertainment section.

6. There's The Rub by Conrado de Quiros, weekdays in the Opinion section.

7. Only in Hollywood by Rolando Nolasco, Inquirer correspondent in Los Angeles.

8. In Profile by Bert Gelia, which appears in the Sports section on Thursdays and Saturdays.

9. Daily's Pass, advice column by Emily Marinlo, Tuesdays in the Lifestyle section.

10. As I See It, by Ted Casa weekdays in the Opinion section.

Compiled by Inquirer.net

Doronila regrets offending Manalo son in column

From page A4

on IT' rallies

Doronila said what he wrote about Manalo and a member of other people was based solely on what he obtained from intelligence sources.

Doronila's statement follows:

"I regret having offended the feelings of Mr. Edwardo V. Manalo by stating in my article that he was with certain politicians around the time of the May 2001 riots. I have no personal knowledge of Mr. Manalo's participation in said events. My statement referring to him and a number of other people was based solely on intelligence sources."

Tight watch on passport fixers set

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN Affairs has sought the assistance of the Pasay City police to arrest those near to consular office with the influx of applications for machine-readable passport.

"From time to time, authorities are making arrests," Gabriela, assistant secretary and spokesperson Gaye Cristobal said.

Cristobal said the presence of fixers had always been a problem but that the department had always been coordinating with the police and the National Bureau of Investigation for assistance.

Even the Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) had been complaining to the DFA about fixers and the proliferation of "fly by night travel agencies," particularly those operating near the DFA passport section in Pasay City.

PTAA President Jose Clemente said "fly by night" travel agencies tainted the image of legitimate travel agencies and their organizations.

Clemente said the "fly by night" travel agencies have hired the services of fixers who usually endorsed passport applicants to get first passport appointment forms in their offices along Libertad Street even before they reach the passport section of the Department.

He said applicants are charged twice the regular fee of P600 for regular processing or P1,5k for expedite. Cynthia D. Balloso

Passage of 3 bills pushed

SEN. MAR ROXAS IS pushing for the passage of three bills meant to provide a quick cash boost to Filipinos who have yet to taste the benefits of the country's economic growth in the past years.

"We need to keep more money in people's wallets. We need strategies for people rather than formulas for fine-tuning statistics," said Roxas in a statement.

The bills are the suspension of the 12 percent expanded value-added tax on oil and other fuel products for up to six months; income tax exemption for minimum wage earners; and the pending bill on cheaper medicines.

Roxas said he would push for the immediate holding of public hearings on his proposal to suspend, suspend for 12 percent VAT on oil products to give relief to consumers and transport groups reeling from rising oil prices. Gerry C. Carbo, trainee, U.P. Cebu

GSIS

Pillar of a Strong and Vibrant Economy

It is government's desire to protect the interest of each of the members and pensioners from the government service. That is why the GSIS ensures the protection of your Fund to provide the utmost benefits that can be derived from it.

And because of the increasingly robust and vibrant economy of our nation, the Fund continues to grow - one which redounds to greater benefits for each and every member and pensioner.

GSIS loans and benefit packages reached PhP 80 Billion pesos in the first 9 months 2007. The Net income of of GSIS has reached PhP 35 Billion Pesos, up from PhP 29.2 Billion from the previous year.

Pension grew by 80%, from the year 2000 to present.

GSIS reaped benefits from investments in blue-chip stocks in the stock market. This success was touted as" the loudest and strongest statement of confidence", in the Philippine economy under Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal Arroyo's term.

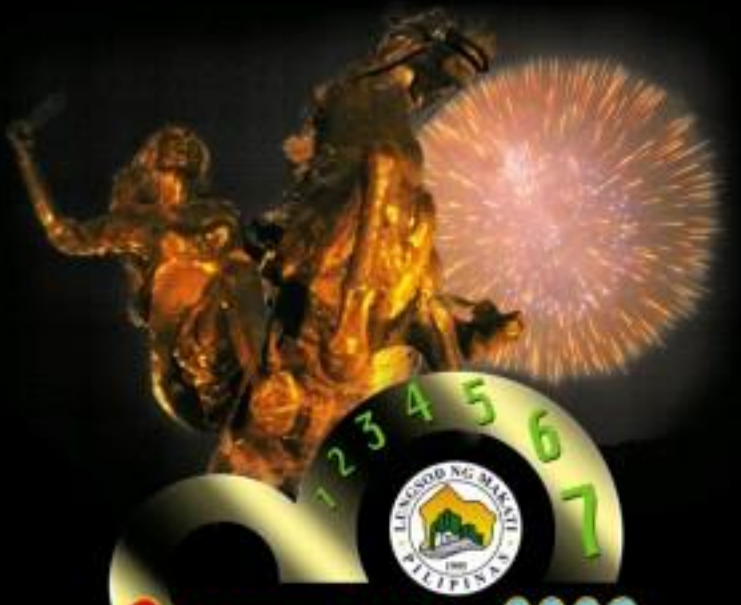
To spur growth in the Housing sector, GSIS introduced, as a first, its low 6% interest rate for its housing loans under the Sisa ang Interest sa Lahat (SAIL) programs in tandem with Gawad Kalinga Mabahong Amortization na House on Lot Para sa Tao or GMA Helps.

The system wide modernization of the GSIS was accomplished. The eCard Plus was launched together with G-Wapps kiosks in both the Philippines and abroad to hasten services for members and pensioners.

GSIS cleaned and purged its records of 2.7 Million fake members from its database.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM
GSIS - Kahit Saan, Kahit Kailan Maasahan

SUGOD MGA KAPATID!
LET'S PARTY IN MAKATI!



COUNTDOWN 2008

DECEMBER 31, 2007 AT 7:00 P.M., AYALA CORNER MAKATI AVENUE

Come celebrate
The MAKATI NEW YEAR'S EVE COUNTDOWN
with us and you could be
2008's FIRST MILLIONAIRE!

Performing live:
Imago, Skarlet Swing Band, Bloomfields
Itchyworms, Parokya ni Edgar
and Kamikazee

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Globe

METROBANK

Photo by: Roger Alcantara of Manila Bulletin

MASS FOR THE POOR
Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales (R) blesses children and evacuees after holding a Mass in a poor community in Manila as the Catholic Church commemorated the feast of the Holy Family yesterday. The archbishop called on the Philippine government to stop violence, deteriorating poor conditions as well as to unconditionally re-poor families in relocation and fishbond. AFP

Palace orders dismissal of Lung Center head for graft

By Michael Lim Ubac

FOR "FAILING TO LIVE BY THE standards expected of a public servant," the executive director of the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) has been ordered dismissed by the Office of the President.

The Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (PAGC) was also ordered to immediately file a criminal complaint for graft against Dr. Jaime A. Bulos before the Office of the Ombudsman.

"Every government official must learn by heart that a public office is a public trust. Faithful compliance with the law is a vital duty which every public official has to observe. Nothing less is expected," Malacañang said.

"Dr. Bulos inexcusably failed to live by the standards expected of a public servant, and for (his) inexcusable failure to be in the government service," it added.

In the decision dated Dec. 10 but which was released only on Saturday, Bulos was dismissed from the service and slapped with accessory penalties of cancellation of eligibility, forfeiture of leave credits and retirement benefits and perpetual disqualification from government service.

The penalties were imposed on the recommendation of the PAGC which found Bulos in violation of the anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Government Procurement Reform Act, and the Code of Conduct for government employees.

The PAGC's investigation report said Bulos supposedly violated the procurement law when he entered into a negotiated contract with the New San Jose Co. instead of conducting a public bidding.

Bulos also procured the services of two other companies, Jimcon and CIBA, for the construction of an "art gallery and glass sculpture with granite bench, rock boulder feature with pond and other accessories," the PAGC said.

Another violation

The investigation also confirmed another violation, this time against the Code of Conduct, by Bulos who was found to have received double compensation as officer-in-charge of the LCP and assistant secretary for the management support service cluster of the Department of Health.

Yanks order Sulu hospital closed at night, says chief

By Ed Cenizal and Julie Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

JOLO, SULU—AMERICAN SOLdiers in nearby Zamboanga province have ordered the closure of the district hospital there at night, the facility's chief told the Inquirer on Thursday.

Dr. Shik Lakkian, Panamao District Hospital head, said she first been going on since Nov. 20 with the American soldiers under a bilateral program featuring not giving any reason.

Lakkian said soldiers barged into the hospital some 45 kilometers from the town, on that date and told the chief nurse to close the facility no later than 6 p.m.

She said the American threatened to shoot anyone on the hospital premises after that time.

The Inquirer sought a comment from Lt. Cmdr. Melissa Echavarrieta, public affairs officer of Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines, through e-text message.

Instead of responding, however, Armed Forces officials in Zamboanga City telephoned Sulu Jamah Abdulmajid, Sulu provincial disaster coordinator, to verify the Inquirer information that US soldiers had ordered the hospital shut at night.

"We also heard several disturbing reports from Panamao but I cannot issue a statement until I see it for myself," Abdulmajid said she told the American officials whom she did not identify.

She said she urged them to investigate the reports because it was unlikely Lakkian would make up stories.

"Lakkian is one of the most respected health officials in the province," Abdulmajid said.

Rebecca Thompson, spokesperson of the US Embassy in Manila, said: "The US government has had no intention to lay down rules or decision about the opening hours of the Panamao District Hospital."

"US soldiers have not been involved in keeping the hospital closed or open," Thompson said in text message to the Inquirer.

Lakkian said she was surprised by the order.

"I thought the americans were here for humanitarian purposes. Our hospital caters to all the indigents in the town who cannot afford the transportation expenses to the Jolo Provincial Hospital," she said.

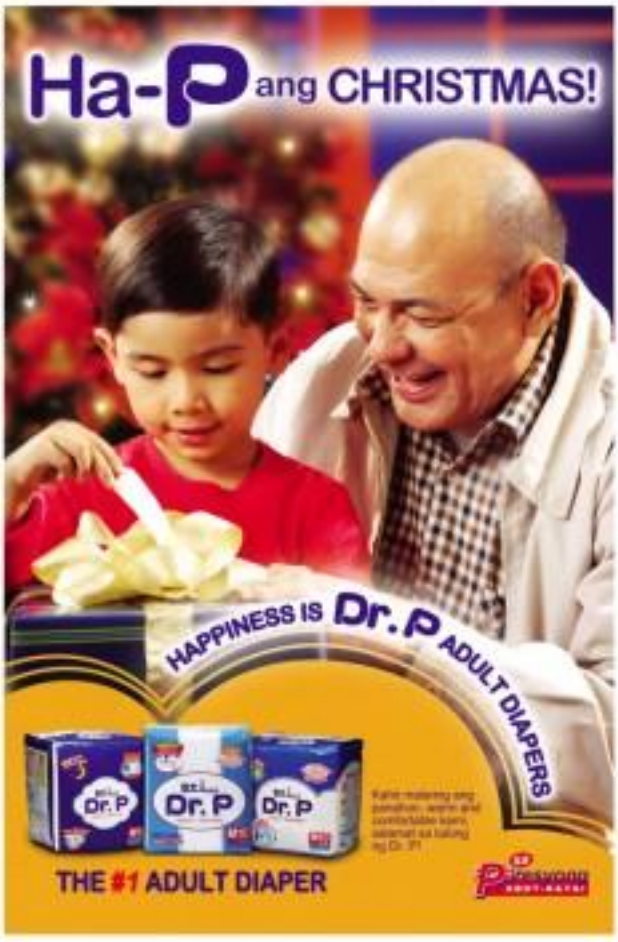
Lakkian said she learned the americans were serious when hospital personnel tried to turn on the hospital's generator on the evening of Dec. 2.

She said the men immediately got a call from Basilan telling her to shut off the generator.

Lakkian said the next morning, she went to see Panamao Mayor Abdulgafar Mahkmuda, "because I could not bear it anymore."

"It's useless to say how because we cannot do anything," she said.

As of Friday, the hospital remained closed at night as soldiers were afraid of going against the order of the American, Lakkian said.



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, December 11, 2007
7th Day: Octave of Christmas
Solemnity

1 Jn 1: 1-4
John 1: 1-18

In the beginning was the Word, And the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him and without him nothing came to be. Whatever has come to be, found life in him, life which for humans was the light. Light that shines in the dark, light that darkness could not overcome. A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light but a witness to testify to the Light.

So the Light was coming into the world, the true Light that enlightens everyone. He was already in the world and though he had been made through the world did not know him. He came to his own, yet his own people did not receive him, but all who have received him he empowered to become children of God by their believing in his name.

These are they, but without need of carnal desire or will of man, they are born of God. And the Word was made flesh, he had his tent pitched among us, and we have seen his Glory, the Glory of the only Son coming from the Father, full now of truth and loving kindness.

John bore witness to him openly saying: This is the one who came after me, but who has always existed since he was before me. From his fullness we have all received, love upon love. For God had given us the Law through Moses, but Truth and loving kindness came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the only Son made him known, the one who is in intimate the Father.

Commentary:

As children, we live always in the Christmas spirit, seeking to live in love and to belong to God. We have been anointed Baptism confirmed, can't wait to all the Christmas that we need to all the power so as to see for us the world in a manner that happens. We have been given the touch of Christ, the Word of God made flesh among us. Our lives have been restored and merged with the body of Christ, in us and upon us. Our soul has come into the world as Christ made flesh dwelling among us always. The light is always there in the darkness, the heart of calmness when among the sin. We are the only ones who have been given the power to become children of God. But we must begin by accepting and believing in the Word and the glory of the Word—the love of us only son for his Father in the Spirit. Our life is in the Trinity, in the world, with one another. Means to live in the light in love and with love. The only food we will ever eat is love—God's own undying love made flesh. And the only real treasure we'll ever see is that love as it endures in us who believe. Do we live this Yuletide coming upon love ever more completely, more fully?

Clarence Enrile Paguia, a Missionary Disciple of Christ, Diocese of Tarlac, is a columnist, radio preacher (dzRJ 810 AM, 8:00-8:30 a.m.) and author of books on Christian living. Website: http://www.bible.net/cep. Christian Reflections is http://www.thewordproject.org/Christian Reflections (with Philippines)

INQUIRER

OPINION

Silence, not noise

EDITORIAL

THE NUMBERS, ACCORDING TO HEALTH SECRETARY Francisco Duque, are encouraging. We have fewer victims of pre-New Year's Eve revelry-related violence this year than we had the same period a year ago. To be sure, today is the day most of the fireworks purchased or produced in the last month are used, so we will have to wait until tomorrow to know whether there has been, in fact, an overall easing in the number of accidents and injuries. It is unfairly too early to claim even a temporary victory in the war on stupidity and recklessness.

A few incidents, of course, are true accidents; even prudence guaranteed safe can prove elusive. But the great majority of revelry-related incidents are avoidable. Why do so many of us fail to avoid them?

It should be easy enough to understand the principle that guns shouldn't be fired to greet the New Year; bullets fall. But is what they were designed to do. Even the allegedly practical expedient of firing into trees or into the ground is not fail-safe. So why fire guns at all?

One guess: Because too many of us fail to see that the rules apply to us as well. To many of us, violence always happens to the other person—until, of course, the errant bullet fired in giddy merrymaking comes crashing through our roof.

Violence happens to other people—this is the same insufficiently reflective attitude that explains why passengers continue to crowd into what they know is an overloaded boat or why many drivers still refuse to use regulation seatbelts.

This same lack of a safety mind-set bedevils the many efforts, conducted by such groups as the Red Cross or by agencies of the government, at disaster preparedness. We think that natural calamities, like acts of man-made violence, happen to other people.

We take encouragement from the apparent decrease in the casualty lists; it is possible that the regular end-of-year barrage of images of firecracker blast victims and firearms-inflicted injuries has brought more and more Filipinos to their senses. The annual gun-waking exercise that members of the country's armed services go through may strike many as PR gimmickry, but it is possible that even the years it fires made a strong impression. Policemen in town after town pledges may no longer fear the fear of God in the lawless, but it is possible that they do add moral suasion to the argument against revelry-related violence.

But much more remains to be done.

We understand that Gabriela Silang Society advocate Mandy Pacheco has proposed a swaddling firearms holiday during the Christmas-New Year's season; this may be worth considering, if only to lessen the probability of firearms-inflicted violence.

If we can reduce the number of injuries caused by New Year's Eve merrymakers firing their guns, then we would have started the year right. If we can mete out harsher punishment to those who cause firearms-inflicted injuries or even deaths, then we would have greeted the New Year with a truly big bang: the sound of justice faithfully served. If we can still the guns for a day, or for a week, then we would have made way for the biggest sound of all: the silence of peacemakers.

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Executive Editor's Office: Antonio Rocha Tiaoc
Telephone/Fax: 896-6000 local 3301 to 3305
E-mail: opinion@inquirer.com.ph • Fax: 896-3007, 896-3101, 896-3102

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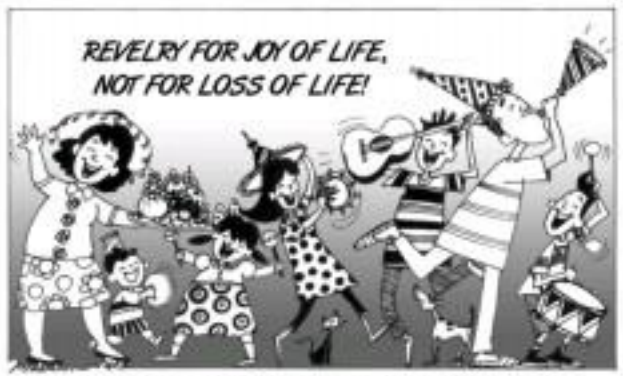

Stop the manufacturers to stop the mayhem

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYBODY. PLEASE, your New Year's resolution:

Stop the manufacturers.

Tonight, the Philippines will be like a war zone: explosions everywhere, fires here and there, smoke rising like a fog, the air smelling of burnt gunpowder, fireworks lighting the night sky. The hospitals will be filled with the dead, dying and wounded. Fingers and limbs of some will have to be amputated, and not we only all of that "New! Improved!" What a way to make money!

Every year, the authorities go through the motions of trying to reduce the bloodletting. After the "bad boy" campaign, however, the number of casualties is as high as ever. But after the corpses are buried, we forget the many home warnings the coming the next year. Why do we do this to ourselves?

Because of manufacturers. Because foreigners taught us to drive away the old year and welcome the new one with noise, and because those foreigners, especially the Chinese and the Spaniards, lamentated us as gunpowder and firecracker manufacturers.

As predictable as the sun rising in the east, the government, warns the people against exploding firecrackers and firing their guns into the air on New Year's Eve—all five shots, just to show that it is doing something about the matter) but knowing that it can't stop the manufacturers. The police order prosecutors bring valid, only to unsuspectionally sell them later in containers. The government also makes a show of arresting people caught using the bombs of the service because of policemen and soldiers, ha, ha, ha. The Department of Health tells the people in press releases not to explode firecrackers, but it knows that people will not heed its advice. The fire department issues reminders through media on how to avoid fires, knowing that it would still be busy fighting fires during the "merrymaking." And the hospitals prepare their emergency rooms, court medical supplies and medicines, and call in all their medical personnel, in preparation for a deluge of patients.

Noel H. Cruz

AS I SEE IT

And nobody tries, nobody seriously bothers to prevent the deaths, injuries and loss of property by going to the source: the manufacturers. Everyone, people will continue buying and exploding firecrackers as long as there are available, never mind all the warnings and pleas to refrain. We cannot stop decades of habit and tradition with a few press releases. And we have to admit it, people get a high watching fireworks and hearing exploding firecrackers.

The solution is not to stop the people from exploding firecrackers (you can't, it's harder than stopping weightlifting). It is to stop the pyrotechnics factories from manufacturing powerful firecrackers that can injure people. People will buy them if those dangerous firecrackers are sold; people never voluntarily do the things they could be causing the victims.

The police, with reporters and cameramen in tow, can't even stop selling firecrackers and confiscate the illegal ones—but all for show, knowing that they cannot stop the flow of firecrackers. The few bundles confiscated do not make a dent in the supply; there are more bundles waiting to take their place. The police cannot stop the flow unless you go to the source and stop it there.

If you can stop the factories from manufacturing powerful firecrackers and instead get them to make only the small cigarette-sized crackers and the fancy ones that explode in the air, then we will have the problem licked. You do not deprive the manufacturers and their workers of their source of livelihood, you also prevent scores of people from dying and being maimed. The merrymaking and the traditional fun continue, but people can be saved. It's as simple as regularly inspecting the factories year-round—not only when Christmas is around the corner. By that time, the firecrackers will have been manufactured. And once made, they have to be sold to the distributors or get over-inventoried back. And if they are available for sale, people will buy them.

The police and Department of Trade and Industry fairs on the local government units, especially in Bulacan and Cebu, owners of the pyrotechnics industries. But local government units of Bulacan are rarely stopped by the "pakiusap" of their "kabalikat."

But with the solutions offered above, nobody will lose any job or inconvenience. Nobody will lose their fists or fingers, either. That's not as hard to do, is it?

In fact the instead-of operations, a categorically humane law, for more modern pyrotechnics factories like the ones they have in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. The dangerous firecrackers we are exploding are being made by children. In small factories in open islands in the middle of our fields in Bulacan. They explode from time to time, killing and maiming the children. Because of unsafe practices. Because the government is intentionally dumb how to do it properly.

Before I end, I wanted like on songs to those who are thinking of outlawing firecrackers outright some thoughts from doctors.

It is true. Tonight is the most likely time to use fingers or limbs if you are careless. Because of the flood of patients tonight, surgeons are more likely to make a mistake in trying to save limbs blasted by firecrackers. Limbs that could be saved in other times cannot be saved tonight. A video a surgical team shows hours to sew back mangled limbs, saves very blood vessels and nerves together. They can't do that tonight, because they want too. There is no time. They have to save the lives of other patients.

So the surgeons are forced to amputate badly mangled limbs to prevent infection that would endanger the life of the blast victim. Remember that when you handle firecrackers tonight.

Driving demons away

ENJOY NEW YEARS DAY WE GET THANKED. Or, at least, we get a day off from work. Our children (some of) bawling their heads off in bedrooms and viewing news again. Third "never again" of course is not unlike the "never again" we utter every time we manage to topple a tyrant—it never happens. We tolerate more grievous wrongs. We fall for tissues of those fingers blown off three years anyway.

The point of the exercise of course is to make enough noise or stir or ruckus to drive the demons away. I know it's hard to break habits, or traditions—though I wonder how this particular tradition began, it's clearly Chinese in origin and we've always assumed superiorities to Asian influences over the centuries—and I know I ought to get well this matter hold off actual people—I might (in fact, we will), tonight. But you're seeing ours, I can dream, can't I?

If the point is to drive demons away, I can suggest other ways by which one may be done more surely. Offhand, the change that opening to mind now.

One, pray. I'm just echoing my good friend Mandy Pacheco's piece of advice the other day. Instead of firing guns or indeed exploding firecrackers, he said, you can always pray. I know that is Cory Aquino's favorite activity, and I know that sounds like something best left to the clowns on that circus, boisterous, unsophisticated, like they just never know it was already way. I'm not knocking it, not in my age, when the people who are firing are no longer "infants" but actually at the 3 do double-digit offline longer relief from the news of the world that the couple of hours of respite offered by the wild abandon of noisemaking—sort of like meditation for parsimonious swine enough except.

I do know prayers smite up a louder noise on heaven than do firecrackers. It is the loudest whisper there is, in heaven's ears. And heaven that is, the one located in the firmament and not female-ville Pasig River. The latter just gives, whole new meanings to the phrase "begging devil heaven with mercies."

Two, make music, not noise. Of course the two are not always easily distinguishable. Over the last few years, our neighborhood has been turned into Rockstock (weirdly on New Year's Eve), never mind New Year's Eve, over the last few years our neighborhood has been turned into Rockstock (weirdly on New Year's Eve,

Agrarian reform

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

[illegible] the year 2008 there will be more legal controversies. Among these which I hope will be settled are those involving agrarian reform. For one, the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (CARL) is about to expire. Should it be extended or its process here or in an amended form? Or should it be extended as is?

Math will be and must this in the coming months. There are two basic data that have to be present here: a relative but reasonable, for there are also those who say that the government is inadequate of making any land distributions at [illegible].

Even under the present CARL, there are even situations which will still have to be settled. And the resolution of landless will be very much in the back of the fray.

One interesting and novel question which came up in a discussion I had with a number of lawyers is whether the law on landless in land lands can be applied to [illegible] lands. Section 400 of the Civil Code says: "No other lands, plants or trees in land lands on the land of another, have what to lands, planted or sown without right to indemnity." And Article 448 says: "The owner of the land on which anything has been built, planted or sown in bad faith may demand the demolition of the work, or that the planting or sowing be removed, in order to replace things in their former condition at the expense of the person who built, planted or sowned, or he may compel the builder or planter to pay the price of the land, and the sower the proper rent."

Admittedly the literal language of the law says that one is a builder in bad faith if he builds or sows on land that does not belong to him. But can the principle be extended to one who builds in violation of agrarian law, as in the case of one who builds on land that has been converted to agro-industrial use but who does not follow the conditions imposed by the conversion order? Just asking.

And if it is the registered owner of the land who builds in violation of the terms of the conversion order, when should the government do about the construction already completed? What would the much resented rule of law dictate? Again, just asking.

Obviously I am referring to the President's order of Dec. 18, 2007 which says that "the entire real developments of subject distributions into a big farm by HLURB is not one of the purposes for which the conversion order has been issued. This clearly deviates from and violates the declaration of the conversion order issued in the respondents HORRIBLE."

I have heard it said that ain't natural, it's [illegible].

Another question is about the meaning of land [illegible]. What is the legal meaning of "landless"? Under Republic Act 6657 "Only the landless [illegible] who are land [illegible] shall be entitled to [illegible] land."

Incidentally, much has been said about the bill, senator Carlos Dato, adjusting the [illegible] Section proposal. The bill provides even that [illegible] of annual 75 hectares belonging to the [illegible] Mala Peripar Cooperative who received [illegible] A and B became per family, under the law, they are by no means landed farmers.

The points of the agrarian reform program is to distribute lands to the [illegible] farmers with sustainable livelihood. That is why the law provides that a family-size farm which is owned above hectares is necessary to fulfill the program's objective of improving the lives of farmer beneficiaries. To say that the landless farmers who own lands whose sizes are far less than what is provided by law are no longer qualified beneficiaries is to push aside the very spirit of the agrarian reform law.

Another misconception that has been spread is that one must be a peasant in order to be a beneficiary under the Agrarian Reform Law. Again RA 6657 contains that misconception or that definition: an attempt at obfuscation. Section 22 says:

Qualified Beneficiaries. The lands covered by [illegible] (1) shall be distributed as much as possible to landless residents of the same barangay, or in the absence thereof, landless residents of the same municipality in the following order of priority:

(a) agricultural tenants and farm laborers;

(b) regular farm workers;

(c) seasonal farm workers;

(d) other farm workers;

(e) actual tillers or occupants of public lands;

(f) collectors or cooperatives of the above-mentioned groups; and

(g) other actual tillers working on the land.

Do the families farmers qualify under this law? Definitely they do. As a matter of fact, many of them were the same farmers who, before the issuance of the [illegible] order by then Executive Secretary Ruben Torres, had been screened and awarded the Certificate of Land Ownership [illegible].

It is now more than 10 years since they won and lost their CLOA in an abandoned conversion order. Now they are back to square one, but still waiting. They have been in the pre-coverage stage and must go through the [illegible] methods process after DAR issues the notice of coverage.

Already the contest is unbalanced, listed against [illegible]. The least that the powerful can do, if they must fight the peasants, is to fight fair. Be honest, for the powerful forego the claim that there is a [illegible] institution supporting the peasant's protest. Where is that institution? What I have seen is an unanswerable proliferation of a bogus institution!

A Blessed New Year!

Hopefully, a better year for everyone

FIRST OF ALL, BELATED HOLIDAY GREETINGS GO TO Sen. Antonio "Sonny" Trillanes II. I realize he has been the subject of a number of negative news stories in the past few days, including an unpalatable full-page ad from a group calling itself "Kongresong ... something."

This young man, who has been incarcerated for more than two years while on trial in right... has stood up to power-ful forces in the even-

tY, speaking out loud about the abuses of a corrupt administration. And, apparently, his views – not necessarily his methods – reflect the sentiments of not people. At bottom is the re-

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

cent poll of Pulse Asia, we are living under the rule of the most unpopular administration in the history of the country. Only a few weeks earlier, Transparency International, a Berlin-based organization, released its Global Corruption Barometer for 2007, showing that the Philippines was No. 10 in the top 30 countries with the highest level of bribery. Only Cambodia, Kenya, Nigeria and Yemen were more corrupt in this top 30 list. This study said that "too often, people must pay with their hard-earned money to pay for services that should be free. And they do not see enough commitment when they look to their government and leaders." How can we expect commitments when some of the shadiest deals in the country are cooked up in the highest echelons of government?

Now, these are issues that we ought to get angry about, to stand, we complain. Trillanes who is basically the messenger of bad news which we would rather not hear.

In 2005, rebel military issues instituted the deadliest attack against a right-to-power government led by President Cory Aquino. They held the nation's business centers, Makati, hostage for almost a week before proudly marching back to their barracks in Fort Bonifacio. Some analysts declared that more harm was done to the economy by this coup attempt than anything else in recent years. The acknowledged leader was Col. Gregorio Honasan.

Gaba subsequently became an elected to the Senate.

According to Sen. Agapito Flamenco, Honasan was also the leader or godfather of the 2003 Oakwood mutiny of rebels-Honasan/Trillanes was the leading spokesperson.

Guess what? After Honasan was arrested for his conspicuous involvement in the Oakwood mutiny, he was voted in twice to the Senate. He won, and today occupies his seat in Congress.

What is particularly captivity, Senator Trillanes also ran for the Senate. He won by over 11 million votes. As it turned out in an earlier column, Trillanes will not engage in dogdog-bantay operations. He did not engage in massive vote-buying. He did not engage in massive cheating. He did not take advantage of a fortuitous fund earmarked for our farmers for use in his campaign. He did not have the usual troops of movie stars and entertainers to attract attention to his cause.

And yet, an awkward administration giants like Mike Defensor, Eduardo Ermita, Ralph Recto and hosts of more anonymous like The Solon and Juan Ponce Enrile, as well as movie stars Cesar Montano and Richard Gomez.

What does all this mean? It means that we as a people have a soft heart for the rebel. Perhaps it is our perennial sense of defiance, our way of expressing anger and disillusionment with those who have the power and money. We are willing to take the risk with young, talented but idealistic and reform-oriented individuals, hoping that one day, we will strike gold and come up with someone who will stand up to a lesser fascist.

According to television reports, the family of Senator Trillanes will spend some additional hours to spend with him on Christmas Day. The usual visitation hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. These were extended to 8 p.m. How thoughtful of the Philippine National Police to extend this bit of comfort to a detained senator on Christmas Day.

By the way, how did convicted rapist Senator Antonio Sanchez Carpio get out? Was he given additional rare hours to spend with his family? Or has it been Christmas for much of the year for him and other influential detainees? How convicted murderers get holiday passes in order to spend a couple of days outside the National Penitentiary with their families. We have also an ex-judge for rebels who pose a threat to the government and former regime and murderers who pose a threat to society but not to the government.

Those are difficult days for Senator Trillanes but we all know that Senator Sanchez always preceded by the agony of Good Friday deep in mind that many leaders in other countries who are in opposition before emerging victorious in power and influence. Even the recently assassinated Benazir Bhutto was in jail or under different forms of captivity for five years, denied by many of her own countrymen, before becoming the first female prime minister of a Muslim country. I have no doubt that Sir Trillanes, the years ahead will be better and brighter.

* * *

A number of readers have called about Miguel de Perada, the young man with the beating hands. Apparently, it is an ear-infection I prescribed the wrong phone number. How rather! The correct number is 893-6967 and his cell phone is 0917-824-1104.

* * *

Next week will be interesting days for the Philippine Air Force. The incumbent, Lt. Gen. Eduardo Ermita, a member of PMA Class 1974 and classmate of AFP Chief of Staff Generalissimo Esperon Jr., is due to retire on Feb. 7, 2008, more than a month.

But the leading candidate for the position, is Gen. Rodrigo Cardenas, the current AFP deputy chief of staff is due to retire on Jan. 11, 2008, which means that if Defensor steps on all the way to Feb. 7, his compulsory retirement date, Cardenas would be short of the one-year requirement for appointment as an armed forces chief. The Commission on Appointments may waive the requirement, but Cardenas is not sure as AFP chief per the recommendation of the AFP Board of Generals, it is necessary for Teleonio to retire in the same few days.

This situation is very similar to the case of Vice Adm. Ernesto de Leon of the Philippine Navy, who retired not like to retire to make way for Vice Adm. Victor Malayo. If de Leon stay on will recall, up to the very last minute, Malayo was not sure of assuming the Navy post. The rumor was that another officer, close to the powers-that-be, was moving heaven and earth to keep Malayo from taking over, and hoping that he would be the chosen one.

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The National Association of Philippine Newspapers

'Wish Ko Lang'

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Carlos Isagani T. Zarate

Sadly, though, there are still many places in the country where the Human Rights Law (RA 9745) and the Anti-Torture Act (RA 9372) is not being actively implemented, such that you can still see incumbent members pulling their hearts out, so to speak, in public places, under public windows and in restaurants. In fact, some public officials are the ones who are the gravest torture officials and law enforcers.

Maybe, there is a need to amend RA 9372—to impose stiffer penalties on violators if they are government employees and officials. There is a pending bill in the House of Representatives that requires the deportion of the dangers of abusers attending right on the packages of all tobacco products. I think the bill should be passed into law pronto, since the current "Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health" is apparently not effective enough as a deterrent.

Here's some "good news" (from the standpoint for those who intend to make quitting smoking one of their New Year's resolutions).

"As soon as you smoke your last one cigarette within 20 min: blood pressure, body temperature, and pulse rate will drop to normal. Within hours: Smoker's breath disappears. Carbon monoxide level in blood drops and oxygen level rises to normal. Within 8 hours: The Chance of heart attack decreases. Within 48 hours: Nerve endings start to regrow. Ability to taste and smell improves.

Within 3 days: Breathing is easier. Within 2 to 3 months: Circulation improves. Walking becomes easier. Lung capacity increases up to 30 percent.

Within 1 to 9 months: Coughs, congestion and shortness of breath decrease. Cilia that sweep debris from you lungs grow back. Energy increases.

Within 1 year: Excess risk of coronary heart disease is half that in a person who smokes. Within 10 years: Lung cancer death rate for the average former pack-a-day smoker decreases to of the smoker. Risk of precancerous cells, throat, mouth, and esophageal cancer is half that in a smoker.

Within 10 years: Lung cancer death rate is similar to that of a person who does not smoke. The precancerous cells are replaced. Within 15 years: Risk of coronary heart disease is the same as that in a person who never smoked."

* * *

As 2007 comes to a close, here are some of my wishes for 2008:

For the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno, to continue its energized manner to expose its misdeeds but sometimes-anomalous acts, to uphold its ideology for the rule of law" and to let Justice Conchita Carpio Morales continue her passive-as-all, middle-of-the-road manner."

For the Arroyo administration, the military and defense establishment, to get out of their "state of denial" and finally put an end to extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances. Period.

For the authorities, to solve with dispatch the killing of journalists, particularly that of Fernando "Bombo" Llemos and Some Bond (columnist, both of Tarlac City). As in the cases of the other murdered journalists in the past, the deaths of Llemos and Armstrong have all the hallmarks of a killing orchestrated to perform.

For an end to the vicious "all-out war" to Mindanao that Displaces and traumatizes thousands of innocent civilians every time it is "announced" by the military against either the Moro or communist rebels.

Finally, I wish that our country will experience a steady peaceful and joyous 2008.

Happy New Year to all.

* * *

Comments at kar_bandalan@yahoo.com or karlo_z23@hotmail.com

Let's get loud

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

Boys will be boys, and whenever I hear that cliche slung, so does the counterbalance of the average Filipino male hits a mad boomer.

By this, though, per cities education at the level of Chinese post-Mao observers on Time Warp, and you still be amazed with a rough but pretty handy guide as to what the coming year will be like.

I remember New Year's Eve 1986 at the bodied, Batasan New Year For ever been through. It was what the Left in the Philippines would have been like. To the fun, an enormous barrage took place, answered with a corresponding barrage from the West (this is in relation to where I was—New Manila); it was heavy than any war movie I have ever seen. I remember waking more than a few times in the early to 1990s and relate the sounds of the Re-form the Armed Forces Movement (RAM) were frightening, the incoming of firecrackers in 1986 was enhanced in was of a firearms and intensity that coming firearms was never able to match.

Incoming to the dawning of 1990 was the way people greeted 1987. While every patriotic Filipino seemed to have spent a fortune on fireworks and yes to spite Marcos (who had turned out an order prohibiting ostentation against firecrackers), in 1987 everyone seemed to have gone for Gun: a lavish and reduced their firecracker load. yet, it was one of the quietest New Year's Eves ever. Now that's the 1990s, after scrapping advanced weapons, was also very quiet.

As have the past few New Years loves. The barrage that began five minutes before New Year and ends two-three minutes later (timed pauses in the wide variation of local time among watch-wearing Filipinos) has grown shorter and shorter, and less and less intense. It is a sign of growing insecurity or increasingly barrio status? Inspecting economic trends is in order.

Whatever the majority of readers order 31, outgoing or loose their hundred notes and conclusion factors, pick up new cash. Do how long the weekly issue and other repairs or what augurs to be a good year or terrible one once hand issues as cause.

* * *

Ah, the wisdom of children. A couple of holidays ago, I stayed with friends in Baguio, and their cuter.

Seventeen—I repeat, 17—children were there, from little babies to a 12-year-old girl who almost acted as line up two noodles from her losing road as her brother. And everywhere, were shining parents and parents-to-be, exchanging family gossip, discussing over the antics of their kids, seemingly oblivious to the cacophony around them.

I am not fond of children but I survived the stampeding and blood-curdling yells of the children just fine. They were a friendly lot, but try as everyone at intervention always fell flat.

I have never seen a parent who apparently let his quite serve for me. Hearing with a puppy that had been brought up by one of the mothers-to-be, the boy marched me play with the puppy for 15 minutes, then shook his head and said, "You know, he's not."

And then he left me to my own devices. Another night, the same boy went around with a device as ordered to his action. When put together the device made noise. Around the living room he marched, flailing "kiri-kiri" sounds with the device. Suddenly, he stopped, looked at me, and, in all seriousness, asked, "Are" scrap-scrap, "are, ere, arrrrrr ..."

Finally he stopped in front of me and exhibited his instruments of torture.

"What is that?" I asked in mock-awe, trying to play along.

He gave me a rather big look.

"It's a toy!" And he emitted off, disgusted with my lack of intelligence.

Suffer the little children, indeed.

Have a safe and happy 2008!

THE LEGEND OF FIRECRACKERS and firecrackers during the New Year is a tradition that we inherited from our Chinese ancestors. We have been made to believe that making all those noise will keep away from bad luck and bad spirits. Practicing indeed are the varying colors of lights and explosive are succeeding boom of bomb this firecrackers.

However, we much appreciate of those New Year stuff, plus negligence, could lead us to bad luck—bad luck that we want to avoid. Let us have a safe and happy New Year!

Let us all have a safe and happy New Year!

—ADRIELLE LOUIS V. PISCA,
kkm_mona@yahoo.com

Sumilao farmers have law and equity on their side

THE SUMILAO FARMERS HAVE received widespread support because law and equity are on their side. Here are facts skimmed or culled by inquirers paid advertisements:

1. The farmers regained the 1,000-hectare Court decision on a procedural technicality even if it violated a cardinal rule that no litigated land can be converted.

2. The Office of the President invited class conversion for grazing exemptions, if non-compliant project, no matter its economic merits, unless he aim to circumvent the law because a conversion is an exception or aggravate where and, unless strictly enforced, opens the door to abuse and corruption.

3. There were enough technicians that should have alerted Sen. Miguel Ziusbi Jim. (DEPC) about the failed conversion and the fake investors including a former assistant secretary of the Department of Agrarian Reform) are presented to have the titles of conversion. If it is true that another 40,000 hectares of land is available to the farmers as an alternative, the same is also available to

children, learn how when you have need on television. Never make yourselves the example of heartbreakings. For the guests, grow up!

Let us all have a safe and happy New Year!

—ADRIELLE LOUIS V. PISCA,
kkm_mona@yahoo.com

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secure the rule of law and unconditionally limited declaration in presidential decrees to sell conversion to their plight. Please spare them the personal attacks and give them the dignity and respect they deserve.

The heart of our Constitution is social justice. For those who are concerned about development, the experience of progressive countries and empirical studies of our own experience in agrarian reform show unequivocally that rulers inclined farmers become owner-cultivators and are given ample support services, agricultural productivity increases, anarchy problems are reduced, urbanization is enhanced and the outlook for growth improves.

Agrarian reform and economic development are not contradictory but are most also have principles. A piggery may be a good project, but it is not human development. Please do it somewhere else where the rights of human beings are not sacrificed.

—ESTER ALPAS, S.J.,
executive director,
Kinabuang Lingkod sa Kalayan,
www.ch.ph
jesterdpas@yahoo.com

Erap's, Jalosjos' 'special treatment' shows GMA is a rebel

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO pardoned ousted President Joseph Estrada, convicted plunderer, reasoned she was like another of former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, a convicted child rapist, to 16 years; and six rebellious Magdalo coddles free. These people are unworthy of such consideration.

In these acts, GMA plundered the truth, raped justice and rebelled against constitution.

—DAVID CASCO,
aquarius@cyberpinoy.com

LETTERS

A literary icon with a big heart

IT IS A PITY THAT I WAS NEVER able to personally thank Adelaida P. Lichauco for giving me a job at eleven later in the Presidential Center for Advanced Studies in 1983.

I was at the time a freshman at the College of Law of the University of Santo Tomas, and I remember I was a job to augment my allowance from my family. Adelaida was then the presidential spokesman, and I told him in my letter that I graduated in 1979, the period for the appointment of the school paper of UP Baths and presented the position to UP president Salvador P. Lopez who was then in Hong Kong.

After a few months, Lopez directed Jesse Arlegui to create the central of the school paper, and I became its first editor in chief having supported the competitive examination for editorship. It was the first student paper created in the Visayas and Mindanao during the early years of martial law, and the only paper to the fourth to publish against criticism paper titled "The Philippines under Marshal Law."

I have told Adelaida that I came to know of the assistance he rendered to writers who have been detained, and I told him I was looking for a job in Manila.

A few days after I mailed the letter, I received a telegram from poet Cirilo F. Bautista to report for work at the PCAS.

Although I did not stay long at the PCAS because I returned to the Visayas, I will always be indebted to Adelaida Lichauco and will always be in awe of the rigours of his heart—he apparently responded to my plea although I was a complete stranger to him, and he still allowed me my rays of literary sun, a true adventure in the high-echelon of the Nine Olde Under Modesia, the French philosophers nonsense).

—EDWARD B. EDUPRASAL,
presiding judge,
Regional Trial Court,
Branch 17, Bayan City

Clarification on Taal Lake's fish cages

PLEASE ALLOW US TO CLARIFY certain facts in the article "Fish cages cite new danger zone in Taal Volcano," (Inquirer, 12/13/07).

Please note that during its meeting last Nov. 14, the Provincial Zone Management Board (PZMB) did not approve "a resolution ... to include the island in the Taal Lake's fish cage zones." Rather, a consensus was reached to consider the request of two barangays (Talisay and San Isidro) under the municipality of Talisay, Batangas to be included in the fish cage zone, based on the Unified Rules and Regulations (URR) for Laguna de Bay operations.

However, two days later, during a group conference immediately following a zone planning activity at Wakas Island, Environment Secretary Jesse Mentoza called for the planning out of existing fish cages in the lake within two years.

Under Sec. 16 of Republic Act 7586, also known as the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act, the environment secretary is empowered to enforce policies that will preserve and amend activities that may threaten the ecological balance in protected areas.

The secretary's directive is in line with the agency's mandate to promote the preservation of Taal Lake, which is the Calabarzon's source of potable water, and to prevent the endemic fish species that make the lake its natural habitat. However, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the PAWB are aware that the fish cages provide livelihood to

majority of the communities surrounding the lake, and are willing to work/ possible alternative livelihood for those who may be affected by the directive.

During the same meeting, the PZMB executive committee did agree to draft a resolution requesting the environment secretary to further review the URR. To date, no such resolution has been drafted and submitted to the DENR.

We hope to have clarified the issue in the spirit of balanced and fair journalism.

—EDUARDO B. PEREZIV,
Gen-E, officer-in-charge,
regional executive director,
Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Calabarzon Region

A sign regarding of the PMB meeting has his: "I would prove that the PMB executive committee did join a resolution that would include the Taal Volcano Island in Talisay among the fish cage zones of Taal Lake. The resolution was filed, although a motion, by Talisay Mayor Florencio Miranda, and was duly seconded by Lazi Villanueva, chair of PMB Subcommittee on Fisheries.

Representatives of the environmental non-governmental organizations who were present in that meeting have also clarified to this writer that the resolution was approved "unanimously."

I do not know, however, whether written documents of the resolution have reached the DENR office.

—HELEN ALEXANDER LUCERO,
correspondent,
Inquirer Southern Luzon

'Educational' visits to malls, TV shows?

MAY I THANK MOD (MS. L. TAN) for writing about the "Thanks and rise of the mall." (Inquirer, 12/3/07) I agree with every single word he wrote.

Of late, I've also noticed that some schools now consider a visit to the (usually) joint of an "educational field trip." I have seen many times, with banners proclaiming "University of So and So" in the parking lot of malls. Most of these schools are in the province. I don't know what is educational about visiting malls, save for the sheer size of the malls. If the students are studying architecture, then it might make sense to visit one.

Also, I have noticed that schools consider as excursion or a TV show "educational." Really now.

—MAY AGARAN,
may.agaran@gmail.com

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Across the NATION

US toxic waste victims get Panlilio help

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—FILIPINOS WHO claimed they were made ill by exposure to toxic wastes left by the United States military at the former Clark Air Base have found another ally in Pampanga Gov. Eddie Panlilio.

That happened as the Philippine Task Force for Base Cleanup (PTFBC) signed a memorandum of agreement with Panlilio for a support program for victims during the group's general assembly at the Parish of the Lord's Resurrection at the Malabanias resettlement site in Mabalacat town on Friday.

Sheba Cabrera, PTFBC-Clark coordinator, said the win-win project when she realized that Panlilio was the same person who frustrated the evacuation center at the Clark Air Base Command (Cabcom) in 1992 when Mt. Pinatubo's lahar submerged the northern villages of Mabalacat.

Previous role

Panlilio was then the executive director of the Archdiocese of San Fernando's Social Action Center of Pampanga that facilitated relief operations and livelihood projects for Cabcom evacuees.

Hipolita Baldemando, PTFBC national coordinator, said more than 20,000 families who stayed at Cabcom until 1998 were exposed to the "deadly toxins."

The defiance Mount Pinatubo Communities had closed Cabcom three years ago, expanding people there to health risks.

The decision came after the Department of Health's National Project Control found high levels of arsenic in the blood samples taken from 47 pairs of children and mothers, including Cabrera.

Tests, Baldemando said, indicated that the toxins and soil at Cabcom were contaminated with heavy metals.

Seeking Panlilio, Cabrera said: "We are very hopeful."

Baldemando said Panlilio said the support program would be finalized in January, but medical help, especially for those seriously ill, would be a priority.

308 deaths

Over 300 victims around Clark and Subic had died from mostly cancer since 1997. Of the more than 100 cases being monitored, the PTFBC helped only half of them on the membership of environment, local officials and private donors.

"Cabcom was identified as a former motor pool of the United States Air Force. While 103 military guidance directs base commanders to report the environmental situation of closing bases to the next tenants, Cabcom's former use was not declared as a contaminated site," Baldemando said.

She said the Veterans International report in 1997, which identified the presence of mercury in drinking water, was not reported to the evacuees or to agencies like the Department of Social Welfare and Development that administered Cabcom.

The PTFBC was formed in 1992 after the US General Accounting Office, the auditing arm of the US Congress, identified "widespread contamination in the Clark and Subic bases" in a report.

"When you were transferred inside Clark, we thought that you would be safe. I was so sad to hear that you were closely affected by the toxics left behind by the US bases," Panlilio told some 1,000 former Cabcom occupants.

He has designated a staffer in his office to work closely with the PTFBC in finalizing the support program. The provincial board, he said, will be consulted on the progress. Rowaine Dayao, *Inquirer Central Luzon*

This 'Trillanes' packs power for New Year, but sale is banned

By Carmela Reyes
Inquirer Central Luzon

ROQUE, PAGASA—IF THE first 2006 fireworks display officially declared in San Antonio, Trillanes IV failed to make a noise, trust this "Trillanes" to supply the fireworks literally.

Some fireworks and pyrotechnic manufacturers in this so-called fireworks capital of the Philippines have been secretly offering to patrons the "Trillanes," a sausage and bouquet type of product not found on display shelves of outlets here.

The "Trillanes," which appears like the "fountain" type product but packs more noise, is 12 inches long and 0.5 centimeters in diameter.

Namesake

Its manufacturers named the product after the senator and busy official who led the Nov. 29 standoff at the Peninsula Manila hotel and the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny both in Makati City.

Its makers, however, label the product with the generic "Special" to avoid attracting attention, as it is a banned product. It retails at P350.

Reynaldo Reyes, 50, a resident of Quezon City, said he bought two pieces for the New Year revelry. He said a mall owner here informed him that they were selling the product.

He said the mall owner asked him not to use the product indoors and light it only in a vacant area away from people and residential areas.

Reyes said the "Trillanes" is being sold only to people looking for "stronger" products, like the banned Fireworkers "Bin Laden Bomb" and "Goodbye Philippines."

Terror names

The "Bin Laden Bomb" fire cracker, which was made here in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in the United States on Sept. 11, 2001, and the "Goodbye Philippines" are cheaper, at P150 to P300 apiece.

Celso Enriquez, owner of the Universal Fireworks in Barangay Turo here, said the "Trillanes" is double the size of the "Bin Laden Bomb" and "Goodbye Philippines," which are the same of a banned soft drink.

Enriquez, however, clarified that he was not selling the "Trillanes" or any of the banned products. He said many unlicensed manufacturers made in this type of firecrackers.

He said policemen last week confiscated illegal products, including the "Bin Laden Bomb" and "Goodbye Philippines," so many customers were looking for other "entertaining" firecrackers.

This led some manufacturers to produce the "Trillanes" to satisfy the demand, he said.

"Many Filipinos want to try what is prohibited... they find thrill in doing what is considered forbidden...for it is found that you should not eat or a restaurant offers," Enriquez said.

HOLE IN THE WALL
A stall selling necklaces and other fashion accessories emerges from a wall of GI sheets on a street in Kawasaki City in South Cotabato.

Lucena 'boga' makers, buyers go underground

LUCENA CITY—A POLICE campaign has driven makers and buyers of a banned, improvised noise-making device to go underground to continue the tradition of using it to welcome the New Year.

Known as "boga," raven lingo for gun.

A local boga maker, who talked on condition he not be identified for fear of getting caught, said he manufactures boga only when orders are placed for them.

He said fear of getting caught has forced him to stop preparing the devices ahead.

He said the prevailing prices of boga range from P400 to P600.

Boga is made out of PVC pipes. It gives out an explosion from melted alcohol kept at the tail end of the pipes.

The alcohol content is shaken to create a vapor and a trigger made from disposable lighters is pressed to produce a boom.

The use of the device has led to serious eye injuries in the past.

Supt. Reynaldo Gennaro Vitaguan, Lucena City police chief, has ordered policemen to patrol the city streets to prevent the illegal sale of firecrackers.

Cases of policemen in the city were also reviewed with hopes to prevent their use during the New Year celebration.

Gun-firing has led to deaths in previous New Year revelries. *Emilio T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Baguio flyover to open middle of January amid talk of anomalies

BAGUIO CITY—THE CONTROversial Baguio flyover will be opened to traffic middle of January next year, after being delayed for years by protesting environmentalists and city residents.

Construction work on the flyover stopped this year when funds ran out, but is resumed a month ago when the House of Representatives assured its continuance of funds funding.

Former Mayor Braulio Yaranon and Virginia de Guia mounted a citizens' campaign to oppose the project, citing its potential hazard to the city's aquifer and for irregularities that were with its financing.

The project was originally designed as a vehicular underpass that would use only P161 million worth of savings from the modernization of Marcos Highway, Yaranon said.

The underpass proposal and the flyover were aimed to augment routes to ease traffic on Marcos Highway and Session Road, the major streets in and from the city.

Councilor Mauricio Domogan Ayaso, who is here for the holidays, was drawn into the controversy when the ordered its funds realigned instead to farm-to-market road projects and a cable car system in the Cordillera to help significantly boost their product.

But Mr. Ayaso later withdrew his instruction when she was advised that it was illegal to divert savings from a government loan. Honorio Cabreza, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

GMA 1st leader in La Union Rizal Day rites

SAN FERNANDO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo on Sunday traveled a historic first in this city where she led the 111th Rizal Day celebration here.

"This is the first time that the President made the flag raising and wreath laying on the monument of (Dr. Jose) Rizal outside Metro Manila and Baguio," said Mayor Pedro Ortega.

It was also the first time that a Philippine president attended a Rizal Day celebration in La Union, according to Gov. Manuel Ortega.

"Rizal day is a very great honor and historic for the province," he said.

Why San Fernando?

Ms Arroyo arrived here from Baguio City at 7:38 a.m. and was given several honors by Philippine Military Academy cadets. She then greeted local officials and heads of government agencies here.

After the flag-raising ceremony, Ms Arroyo, who was accompanied by Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr., laid a wreath at the foot of the Rizal monument in front of the City Hall here.

Mayor Ortega said nobody knew why Ms Arroyo decided to attend the Rizal Day celebration here.

"I asked the President's staff why she chose San Fernando. They said she just decided that she wanted to do the wreath laying and flag raising here," he said in Filipino.

Rush job

Despite the short notice, Mayor Ortega said they were happy that the celebration was held here. "We had to work 48 hours just to organize the entire program, (and) beautify our plaza, had the statue painted," Mayor Ortega said.

"The result was good and we were told the President was happy," he said.

Governor Ortega said Ms Arroyo did not deliver a speech because she was in a hurry to return to Baguio "for another engagement."

"But then, ang mensahe lang naman siyempre, e, (the only message there is) for us students: Joan Rizal is our (national hero)—move forward," he said.

The last time Ms Arroyo delivered a Rizal Day speech was in Baguio City in 2002, when she announced that she would not run in the 2004 presidential elections to foster unity in the country.

Six months later, however, Ms Arroyo declared before an assembly of senior citizens at the Expo Filipino in Pampanga that she would run for president in the following year's elections.

After the ceremony in San Fernando, Ms Arroyo went to the La Union provincial capitol to have breakfast with local officials.

"We did not talk about politics. We are on vacation, we are on a holiday so, no politics," said Governor Ortega.

"Mahigpit po naman ang (discipline), e. 2010 pa yan. (The election is still years away). So, it's too early to be talking. Our drive now is to preserve and do what is necessary for the country and for our province of La Union," he said.

"She did not give promise anything but she said she wanted that our international airport here will be completed," said Mayor Ortega.

In Baguio City, leaders of a sect that worships Rizal gathered at Rizal Park in the city at 7 a.m., hoping to meet Ms Arroyo.

Apolonio Bermano of the Igorot Filipino Kinship Filipinas Lamsa at Bagong Sinismayang said that for the past years, during the times Ms Arroyo led the Rizal Day celebration in Baguio.

Bambilat Aviles, one of the church's elders, said they call themselves "alipin ng diyos na si Rizal (servants or slaves of god Rizal)," and have been practicing the spiritual hero's mystical origins for decades as a small community here. Reports from Soledad Cardinoza, Honorio Cabreza and Desiree Cabrera, *Inquirer Northern Luzon*

MS ARROYO during the flag-raising ceremony at the celebration of the 111th anniversary of the martyrdom of Dr. Jose Rizal in San Fernando, La Union.

Talk of US intervention prompts Sulu meetings

DANSALAGA CITY—A US military spokesperson denied reports that American soldiers in Panamao town in Sulu have been preventing health workers from operating the district hospital there at night.

Dr. Ishak Lakkian, Panamao District Hospital chief, earlier said that the operations ordered by a Mbgt. Bonbong—have started implementing the order on Nov. 30 without offering any reason.

She said a team of soldiers barged into the hospital, which has some 45 kilometers from here, on Nov. 30 and told the chief nurse to close it not later than 6 p.m.

Threats

Lakkian said the American soldiers had threatened to shoot anybody seen inside the hospital's premises after that time.

But Lt. Commander Melissa Schwartzman, the public affairs officer of the Joint Special Operations Task Force Philippines based in this city, denied the report.

"All these [stories of] information are pure allegations and that allegation is not true," she said.

She said Info Gov. Abdusakur Tan has ordered an investigation of the report.

Schwartzman also said she will has to look into reports quoting a soldier named Mbgt. Bonbong.

"Personally, I don't know; I still have to look into that and that name is astounding," she said.

Surrounded

On Saturday, Hadja Jainab Abdulmajid, Sulu disaster coordinator, said Governor Tan has called on Lakkian and a certain Major Wahid for a meeting.

"Andito sila ngayon, gusto kasi ni governor na magkaroon ng harap-harapan na usapan at ma-diretsahan ang problema. [They're here now because the governor wants a face-to-face meeting and for the problem to be clarified and]," Abdulmajid said.

"She is committed in her present. In fact, she again mentioned the name of Bonbong and requested it to his superior, Major Wallace, especially the about to kill order," Abdulmajid said, adding that it was unlikely for Lakkian to invent rumors.

Lakkian is one of the respected health officials in the province," Abdulmajid said.

Embassy words

Rebecca Thompson, spokesperson of the US Embassy in Manila, said "the US government has had no role in any discussions or decisions about the opening hours of the Panamao District Hospital."

"US soldiers have not been involved in keeping the hospital closed or open," Thompson said in a text message to the Inquirer.

Lakkian said she was really surprised about the order.

"I thought those Americans are here for humanitarian purposes. Our hospital caters to all the indigents in the town who cannot afford the transportation expense to the Sulu Provincial Hospital," she said.

Lakkian said they found that the American soldiers were curious when they tried to enter off the generator set in the evening.

She said she got a call from Bonbong asking her to turn off the generator.

American orders

"My two staffers were intimidated by phone to get through the kitchen door to the genset with their left hands on their heads. After they were able to put off the genset, they were instructed to get back inside immediately," Lakkian, who was at the hospital at that time, said.

Lakkian said in the morning, she immediately went to Panamao Mayor Abdugaffar Abdusjak "because I would not trust it anymore."

"It is useless to stay here because we cannot do anything," she said.

As of Friday evening, the hospital remained close at night as staffers are afraid to stay due to the threats, Lakkian said. *—Julie S. Alipala, with reports from Ed Sunnal, Inquirer Mindanao*

AMERICAN soldiers mingle with Filipino troopers in Panamao, Sulu. The town is considered a high-risk area for US forces following clashes in the past between government soldiers and followers of MNLF leader Habier Malik.

LUCKY OBJECTS

Fruit vendors in Legazpi City take advantage of an expected surge in the sale of round fruits as many Filipinos cling to the belief that such objects could bring good luck in the New Year.

Justice eludes kin of former vice mayor 1 yr after his slay

SUBIC CITY—THE WIDOW OF former Tapaz Vice Mayor Victor Gaviñe yesterday lamented that justice remained elusive exactly a year ago yesterday since the former town official and his two companions were gunned down.

Gaviñe's widow, Rosemarie, despite her nerve being the incumbent mayor of Tapaz, lamented that the family was still nowhere near finding the masterminds of the murder of her husband and his two companions, Carida village chief Leonardo Cerdeño and the vice mayor's bodyguard Jaime Empalilio.

The late vice mayor, Gaviñe and Empalilio were about to attend the consecration of a fiesta queen of Barangay Tall on Dec. 30, 2006, when three unidentified armed men shot them outside the barangay hall.

So far, only one suspect, Noel Pacamaquin, has been charged with multiple murders in a case now pending at the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 28 in Mambusao, Capiz.

At large

But Pacamaquin, the driver of former Capiz provincial board member Ismael Fernandez, has remained at large.

Pacamaquin also identified a Manuel "Boy" Bonanza, 44, as a possible suspect in the murders. He has not been charged.

Bonanza, a frustrated murder suspect who escaped from the Capiz provincial jail in 1985, was arrested in Manila early July and is now held at the Capiz Rehabilitation Center due to several pending cases not related to the Gaviñe murder.

Bonanza has denied any involvement in the Gaviñe murder.

Chief Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, in one would know for sure who masterminded the killings, police had earlier said.

Major Gaviñe, for her part, said that she and the families of Cerdeño and Empalilio would just continue to hope that the truth would eventually come out and justice would prevail.

Politics

The mayor said she would organize a Mass for the first death commemoration this for her late husband, Cerdeño and Empalilio on Jan. 31, 2008, so that their sons-mates would not forget that justice has not yet been found.

Mayor Gaviñe said she believed that the killing of her husband, who was planning to run for town mayor before he was killed, was politically motivated.

Mrs. Gaviñe eventually decided to run for mayor and won. *Rofjet V. Galvez, Inquirer Visayas*

Mayor prepares suit vs actress in custody war over love child

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

KALOOKAN CITY—PUGANDan Mayor Magalitsiso Pena on Friday said he would file four criminal cases against his former live-in partner, Marie Roxanne "Mitzi" Perez, and her lawyer for abusing the picture of his 3-year-old son and naming him on TV.

Pena said the act of Perez and her lawyer, Evalyn Ursua, in exposing his son on national TV endangers the boy's life. He said he would file the cases at the regional trial court either in Manila or in Negros Occidental.

But Ursua said Pena is "just desperate."

Diversion

"Sinisi kasi ako [he's] pinagbintangan ako [he's] nagbibigay ng diversion [I'm being blamed for giving diversion]," Ursua said.

On Dec. 3, the SC ordered Ursua to turn over the child to Perez pending appeal. The SC has yet to rule on where the custody trial for the child would be held.

Pena has refused to turn over the boy, saying his son is in danger of being kidnapped by the New People's Army (NPA) if he is in the custody of Perez.

He has received an ambush by the NPA last May 28. The NPA named him, but killed his bodyguards. The guerrillas said Pena's would always be a target.

TV exposure

Pena said the showing of the face of the boy and naming him on national TV is in violation of Republic Act No. 9262 (Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act), the Custody Law, the Child and Youth Welfare Code and the Revised Penal Code, which carries a penalty of about 10 years imprisonment each for Perez and Ursua.

"They did not find the child by showing his picture on national TV because we are abroad. I am so irked by Ursua's exposing my son to the danger of kidnapping. I am seriously considering leaving him with my friends abroad for his safety and go home by myself," Pena said.

He said he is on leave as mayor of Pedapanahan until Jan. 17 in order to protect his son.

Pena also explained that a continued stay with him would not endanger his son since he has ample security provided by the Army and police.

NPAs wound Marine in Palawan town ambush

PUERTO PRINCESA—SUSPECTED New People's Army (NPA) rebels ambushed the 29th Marine Company in Taytay town in Palawan and wounded one of the Marines while a member of the barangay council was shot dead in a separate attack by the rebels in Bataraza town in Catanduanes, reports said yesterday.

The Marine was wounded after the NPA rebels ambushed a military convoy along a main road in Taytay town Saturday night.

The attack happened barely two weeks after ranking military officials declared mopped up operations against communist rebels who killed three Marines in an ambuscade in the nearby town of San Vicente last Dec. 16.

Senior Supt. Dennis Peña, Palawan police director, declined to give the identity of the wounded soldier, who reportedly suffered "superficial wounds," in deference to military protocol.

In Catanduanes, a member of the barangay council was shot dead by suspected NPA members here the night in Bagamanoc town, some 56 kilometers from the capital town of Virac.

Senior Supt. Francisco R. Fadullon Jr. identified the slain barangay official as Ramon Solon, 58, resident of the coastal village of Cagbalete located 30 km away from the town proper.

Geraldine Fiel, Marlon Bascos and Doreen Gacoss, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Slain Davao City broadcaster buried

DAVAO CITY—MURDERED broadcaster Percie Lintuan was buried yesterday.

His killing was unlikely to be solved soon despite the arrest of a suspect.

Jun Mary Lintuan, 30, the eldest son of the broadcaster, refused to comment on the arrest of 21-year-old suspect Oliver Somo, whom police tagged as the gunman.

"The case is not solved until the mastermind is identified," the grieving son told the Inquirer.

Somo was buying roasted chicken in La Verna Hills subdivision when arrested by police.

In a lineup, two witnesses pointed to Somo as the alleged gunman, but a third witness contradicted the claim.

Lintuan was gunned down Dec. 28, shortly after leaving dyGD radio station on R. Castillo Street. He bought black tires in the radio station for his program in which he had criticized Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

Lucio Cantos, a fellow broadcaster who was with Lintuan in his car during the attack, said an official from the Department of Justice called him to say that nine of the key witnesses could not positively identify Somo as the gunman.

"It's not yet certain if indeed the arrested person was the real culprit," Cantos said.

Dante Jimenez, chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, a civic group, said he had a meeting with Chief Supt. Andino Cura, Southern Mindanao police chief, and ordered authorities to "be cautious not to be brainwashed by political pressure."

"It must be a solid case so that it can withstand court protocol rigs," Jimenez said.

He said he has received a death threat through text messages telling him to keep off the Lintuan case. Dennis Jay Santos, Ritchelle Ann Sandig and Joselle Badilla, *Inquirer Mindanao*

FRIEND Lintuan's eldest son reads an eulogy for his father as the murdered broadcaster's remains are buried at a memorial park in Davao City.

Filipino healing priest does so 'many miracles'

From page A1

continues to amaze, baffle and bring hope and joy through his ministry that has seen the healing of countless sick and infirm in many parts of the world, including the Philippines.

"It is not me," he says casually. He is convinced that he is just a channel for God's healing power.

The soft-spoken Suarez, a 2007 TIME (The Outstanding Young Men) awardee for medicine, has developed an enthusiasm that is both pleasant and endearing. His boyish looks do not easily reveal "what God has wrought" through him. He does not have an otherworldly aura nor does he shriek and shout in stay-awl elements like many Bible-thumping extravaganzas do. Suarez goes about it quietly, in his own soothing way, touching, praying over people, pleading for healing. And because he wears everything centered in the Eucharist, he always begins with a Holy Mass.

Like in the Bible

Miraculous healing continues to happen. People who have been assisting him for some time have witnessed the impossible.

Brother-priest Greg Maesschalck of Congiles for Christ-Ormoc Kalinga has seen it all. "Except the raising of the dead," he says. "But the dead bone, the blind see, the lame walk—all that is told in the Bible—I have seen it happen."

In Bukavu, Montevideo narrates, there was this young boy who was born with practically no bones. "He was soft—like jellyfish. I was holding him in my arms when Father Suarez prayed over him. I myself felt the bones grow inside the boy's body and suddenly there he was—walking."

How does one explain that?

"My own problem here is that I have seen so many miracles, it has become so common to me," Montevideo says.

Not that he is complaining.

Journalistic and documentation backgrounds have his every move of this noble mission to tell and let countless to see his video camera to capture moments that he hopes would convince many of what God is doing through Suarez. He has created a Web site for priest and has uploaded images on YouTube which have been getting thousands of hits.

Boy from Butong

Born in 1967 (he turns 41 in Febru ary), Suarez is the youngest by 5 and, the only boy. Because of compassion for animals that are usually slaughtered for the traditional vanilla treats (midnight meal) feast.

The beef, pork or chicken they're enjoying had their "throats slit, limbs hacked off and skinned—from which we relish our delicacies." Pigs were plunged into vats of scalding water for hair removal while still conscious and chickens were scalded alive in feather removal tanks," says Rochelle Regodon, campaigns manager of Miss Asia Pacific.

They should also refrain, if not totally, from eating fish or any aquatic life—crustacea in mind stressing their pain; it drug's hearing—as well as a rave—in 30 times more sensitive than a human's.

Violent places on earth

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ipino diocesan priests who were seeking a life abroad.

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"I was ordained in 2002 when I was 35," he says, "and I am the only one who was assigned to go worldwide as an after ordination."

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40-hour vigil Jan. 11-13

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Pray for, be kind to all God's animals, Church urged

From page A1

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Tips for an animal-friendly New Year celebration

- KEEP YOUR COMPANION ANIMALS indoors and in a familiar room, with sufficient food and water. Frightened animals wander when outdoors by hiding under a bed or in a closet, so owners are advised not to force their pets to come out until after the New Year noise has died down. Make sure the doors to safe, fire-resistant areas (rooms or windows) and children are aware.
- Play soothing music to keep them calm.
- Take your dogs for a walk before the celebrations begin on New Year's Eve to tire them out so they would sleep through the noise from fireworks going off.
- Don't light firecrackers near an animal shelter or a zoo. Animals in caged environments are already an symbol because of their unnatural surroundings. Noise and smoke would cause them to panic, and they could hurt themselves. Also, the pollution caused by firecrackers could be harmful for the animals.
- If you are going away for the holidays, take your animal companions with you or leave them with someone who is sensitive to their needs and will keep them safe. Never leave them alone while you are away.
- If your animal companions are prone to anxiety, talk to your vet. They may be able to prescribe something to help keep them calm. It's a good idea to name your companion animal's sleeping area (dare) so you can lessen its confidence during this stressful time.
- Don't forget the dogs and cats who have made homes in your neighborhood. Line them into safe areas

From page A1

doesn't and men are clearly defined in the Bible."

She cited Proverbs 12:10 which says "A good man takes care of his animals, but wicked men are cruel to them."

Pray for animals

For her part, Mrs. Hontiveros Lichauco, president of PAWS, has this to say: "The secret to real and lasting peace is starting to act on the love for God's animals into our lives. It is what the real and less distant...humans and animals are co-beneficiaries of this world."

How do humans let animals into their inner sanctum?

"One great way is to pray for them daily," Lichauco says.

Another is "ecofriendly-minded" done in church prayers, especially in October (when World Animal Day is celebrated) but also during New Year's Eve ceremonies. Tree watch and see tree and lasting peace expand to forests, to our lives, to our country, to the world," she says.

Dominga adds: "Preaching about love and forgiveness for one's neighbor without touching respect for all creatures is hypocritical."

Gluttonous proportions

"Ironically, there is no other season which exploits animals more than on the very month that Jesus was born. We continue the feast as we usher in the New Year, in gluttonous proportions," says Regodon. "Wouldn't it be better if food and drink weren't the focus of revelry and abuse?"

Pets explains that animals raised for food are subjected to violent, painful procedures such as de-horning, de-beaking, and castration, all of which are done without anesthesia.

"In order to maximize profits, farmers in factory conditions to ignore to small they confinedly were around," Regodon says. "Many farms see the light of day or feel soil or grass beneath their feet. When they have reached the end of their brief growth cycles (artificially stimulated by lights), they are crowded into trucks for their deaths."

Free vegetarian kit

"Our intention is to raise awareness on behalf of God's creatures and to make the world a more merciful place. We want to put a stop to animal abuse and foster compassion toward all creatures by encouraging the adoption of a vegetarian diet. This is entirely in keeping with the most cherished ideals of people of faith," Regodon says.

Peta is encouraging those who want to give up meat to write to PETA Asia-Pacific.com for a free vegetarian starter kit which is loaded with information, tips and recipes.

"Please consider exploring vegetarian, the only diet that is compassionate and respectful of all God's creatures. To find out more, visit www.petaasiapacific.com," adds Regodon.

Solving world hunger

In his book "Diet for a Small Planet," Frances Moore Lappe notes that the food cost of an eight-ounce steak is equivalent to a full-bag of cooked cereal/grains for ill to 16 people. The 4.6 pounds of grain fed to cattle to produce one pound of beef for human beings represents a colossal waste of resources in a world still teeming with people who suffer from protein malnutrition.

According to the British group Viva Sam [a famine relief/ charity organization which believes in vegetarianism], a 20-acre farm can support 60 people growing soybeans, 24 people growing wheat, 10 people growing corn but only 1 person growing beef.

According to Food Revolution and best seller Hobbins, "under even the best of circumstances ... a meat-based diet is incredibly wasteful of the resources and inputs that make food production possible. If we are serious about ensuring a life-long, lean and healthy existence for all, it is imperative that we shift to a plant-based diet."

Physician and author Sean Ornish M.D., who developed the Ornish Diet, specifically formulated to reverse heart disease, recommends a vegetarian diet together with exercise, meditation, yoga, emotional support groups and no smoking.

A SPECTACULAR YEAR FOR SMART INFINITY

SMART Infinity, the premiere post-paid service of Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART), truly shone this year with a host of exclusive treats and events for its privileged subscribers. "We are proud to report that SMART Infinity was able to live up to its thrust of giving only the best to its customers," said SMART Infinity head, Julie Carcaller. Here are the highlights of the past year:

Aplus METRO
Editor Emer C. Dipasupil
Mail or e-mail feedback: Inquirer, Inc. 5th Floor, 40 Chino Roces Ave. (formerly Amorsolo St.), Makati City 1200 E-mail: ec_metro@inquirer.com.ph

MMDA looking for a few good men

4,000 posts vacant as 3,510 workers opt for early retirement

By DJ Yap

GOOD TIDINGS FOR UNEMPLOYED FILIPINOS IN THE COMING year: Thousands of job vacancies have just opened up at the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Up to 4,000 positions are up for grabs at the MMDA as the agency seeks to fill up vacancies left by employees who opted for early retirement, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando said yesterday.

Some 500 of the vacant posts are for traffic enforcers who will supplement the agency's 1,000 strong traffic workforce, not including deputized enforcers employed by local governments, he added.

The MMDA is also looking for college graduates with degrees in mechanical engineering or architecture. Other positions available are operators of cranes and other heavy equipment, mechanics, welders, drivers, gardeners and carpenters.

According to Fernando, the prospective new hires are expected to perform tasks in line with the MMDA's programs, including its undertaking "Metro Clean" beautification project, among others.

Those interested in the traffic enforcer position should have two years of college education and a height of at least 5'4" for women and 5'6" for men, the MMDA chair said.

Fernando urged job seekers to apply for the positions as soon as possible to ensure sufficient manpower for the agency.

This year, 3,510 MMDA employees filed for early retirement, drastically reducing the 5,000-strong workforce. Their jobs ranged from office clerks to street sweepers and traffic aides.

Of those who opted to retire early, almost 2,900 have been issued "step-working" notices since Oct. 31. The rest have been allowed to extend their term till today, the last day of the year.

The early retirement option was offered to MMDA employees in line with the government's rationalization program.

LUCKY FRUITS
A woman at a market in Malate, Manila, filches basket with round and not-so-round fruits for New Year's Eve. [illegible]

Car thieves strike in QC, make off with van, SUV

By Joanneve C. Alvarado

CAR THIEVES STRUCK TWICE YESTERDAY in Quezon City, taking a van and a sport utility vehicle and leaving one of their victims injured.

Ronald Banting was brought to the East Avenue Medical Center for a deep cut in the right eyebrow after the thieves made off with his white Toyota Grandia van with special license plate HW 88.

Based on reports from the Quezon City Police District, Banting was parked in front of a supermarket on Congressional Avenue in Project 8 at around 2 a.m. yesterday when three armed men wearing bonnets alighted from a white Honda Civic and approached him.

The police said the suspects hit Banting in the head with the butt of a high-powered firearm and took over the wheel of his van. They brought along Banting, left him on Road 1 near the corner of Tuason Avenue in Project 6 and then drove away.

Policemen on board a patrol car chanced upon the victim and brought him to the hospital.

Minutes after the van was taken, three men on board a red motorcycle stole a white Toyota Rav-4 (UW 556) which was parked in the corner of Brixton Street and G. Tuason Avenue in Sto. Mesa Heights.

The vehicle was recovered two hours later at the corner of Commonwealth and Sgt. G. M. Means Streets in La Loma.

Witnesses said the men on board the vehicle abandoned it and escaped on a motorcycle which they had commandeered.

Experts offer tips on keeping pets calm on New Year's Eve

By Marie D. Salazar
Contributor

AMID THE EXCITEMENT AND FESTIVITIES on New Year's Eve, many people often forget that not everyone enjoys the use of firecrackers to greet the coming year, especially animals.

Dr. Wilk Crespo of the Vets in Practice Clinic in Mandaluyong City has advised pet owners to take the necessary steps to keep their furry companions calm and safe during the merrymaking.

"It would be best if the animals are placed in a room as far away as possible from the streets to at least minimize the loud noise" emitted by firecrackers, he said.

There are also medication that owners can give their pets hours before the festivities start to keep them calm, he added.

For example, there's Calmivet which makes dogs a little drowsy. There's also the herbal-based Pet Relaxacol.

But Crespo advised people to consult a veterinarian before dispensing any medicine to animals "because they might give the dosage intended for humans which could be dangerous."

For those who prefer the natural approach, the veterinarian has this suggestion: "Massage lavender oil on your pet's head and light a lavender candle or incense which gives a soothing effect."

The lights in the house can also be dimmed to create a calming atmosphere. With a lighted candle or incense in the room, however, people should occasionally check on their pets or stay with them just to make sure that no fires break out, Crespo said.

Joey Venancio, president of Love4pets.com, an animal welfare group, also offered several tips.

Cats, for example, can be pinned to super because when they are frightened, they get disoriented and might flee from the house, he said.

Dog owners, on the other hand, should observe their animals for signs of trauma which include incessant barking, restlessness (pacing back and forth) and shaking.

"To reach his owners," Venancio said, "there's no single formula in dealing with this situation." He added that animals living in high-rise condominiums are luckier because the noise level is lower.

People living closer to the street, however, can play some music to drown out the sound of the [illegible] from outside their house.

He recommended that dogs in super sensitive the house be placed away from the area where firecrackers are being lit "because they have sensitive noses" and the air they breathe in could be harmful to them.

According to Crespo, cases of poisoning caused by gunpowder are common after the revelry. When dogs go out on the streets, they might step on gunpowder which they could ingest when they lick their paws.

Young priest finds that giving comes from the most unexpected places

NO ROOM FOR ATHLETES

Rene Enriquez, 36, of Quezon City sent this new message: "I hope Quezon City government will talk per se and to this yearly habit of using the sports gymnasium basketball as a hangar year whenever a new Christmas giveaways for the barangays. Every Christmas, children, athletes are left out as my training facilities gets all given away."

(See ★ 2/C)

Citizen's call

Choosy cab driver

TAXI 1183 FOR The unfair practice of this taxi driver with plate number TXN- 1183 who refused to bring us to our destination to no Jupiter Street in Osmeña Highway last Dec. 13 at 8:15 p.m. The reason he gave was that the traffic was bad. In the first place, he refused at to pay twice that rate but we insisted on numerous times. After our failure agree to his proposal that we pay him extra seven-thirty meter was running, he told us to get off. I told him that we would report him to the authorities, but he said he didn't care and that it was up to him to know his passengers and his destinations. I hope drivers like him are taught a lesson or two about the civil relations/Courteous service.

INELLI AYSON, St. Mark's Ville

An overpass for Marcos Highway pedestrians

PEDESTRIAN Lowest an overpass to cross the area Marcos Highway at Cru Fur, Pasig City. Many people cross the Boulevard is especially during rush hour to the very long.

JOSE, 37, Pasig City

Waterless on Premium Street

ATTENTION Mayor/Executive Director/Secretary I have been denied a delivery or our service despite the Quezon Executive water when we supply to this month's installment. Please help us.

TERESITA VILLANUEVA, 62, Quezon City

Potholes and traffic in Bicutan area

POTHOLES Ang daming butas sa kalsada ng Bicutan Exit (Service Road) papuntang Bicutan Market ay walang tulong ng mga Jubat kaya nagkakaroon ng malaki talaga. Sana ay ang mga kinauukulan ay agad na ayusin. Thanks.

ANGELITO, Bicutan

Water leak in Barangay Balong Bato, QC

BATASAN Jacinto Supply and Flying's Executive Center in Barangay Balong Bato, Quezon City. There is a water leak on the gutter side. That is a lot of water going to waste. Thanks for your attention.

TERESITA VILLANUEVA, 62, Quezon City

By Tina G. Santos

IT ONLY TAKES A MINEPOINT hours to make a difference in the lives of the less fortunate.

This is what Fr. Reynaldo Mendoza, 26, tells his—to make poor people happy not just during the holiday season but all the toughest the year.

Fondly called Father Zenki by friends and parishioners of the diocese of Maasina before de Cavite, Mendoza is in Manila where he spent his doctorate. Manalaki has committed himself to bringing cheer to indigent families through his various charities.

Along with several col-, and nuns, Mendoza through the Pius Carmeli Charity Apostolate which he formally established in 2005, has been feeding beggars and giving basic assistance training to child laborers and street children in Metro Manila.

"We pack sandwiches and juice which we distribute to hungry regions," he told the Inquirer. "We teach kids who sell newspapers, those who wash windshield of parking to school to read and write so they won't be fooled by unscrupulous individuals who could take advantage of them."

Manalaki, who himself was born to a poor couple—a former trolley and a mother who worked as a in the city in Metro Manila—has also been sending impoverished but deserving students to school and helping out indigent patients by shouldering part of their hospital expenses.

No gifts, just cash

To raise money for his causes, the priest has turned his birthday celebrations into fund-raisers. "In lieu of gifts, my friends donate money with the I use to help others. It's easy to know that there are many hopehearted people who want to help," he said. "I can't do this alone. I believe I'm just an instrument of God to let others become more generous."

On his 25th birthday Manalaki chose 23 families who received livelihood packages like banana-cue and cigaret for reselling sets.

"My give them complete packages," he said. "If it's a banana cue skewers, everything they need—from the cooking oil to the pots, bananas and sticks—are provided. We also train them so that all they need to worry about is how to make their small business grow."

He knew what they got are not all duty only because they also much them how to make a living," he added.

This holiday season, Manalaki has set early conceived gifts for 30 kids in Barangay where he is now based. He also made sure that 100 survivors of Pius Carmeli would carry out his traditional Ogbo Simbanuel, a gift-giving and feeding activity for poor children in Metro Manila.

"This is one way of making others feel that God is really with them," Manalaki said. "We also feed the Manong Manong and gives milks and letters to nurses concerning the youth and family life, said.

The priest's dedication to helping other people is rooted in his experiences when he was a young boy he disclosed.

At age 12, tortured of spending most of his time at play, Manalaki said he became preoccupied with what was happening around him.

"I noticed that there were many underprivileged people in our community," he said. "To help them, I went around, handing out letters to rich families, asking them to bring small amounts of rice and a few cans of sardines to our needy neighbors."

Surprisingly, many responded to his call, prompting him to form the gift-giving activity into a yearly event.

"The charity work started several years ago, but it was formally named The Carmeli code in 2005," said the priest who hails from Tarapaca, Nueva Ecija.

Reluctant to name people, Manalaki's concern for the poor was a strong indication of what he who dormant to be when he grew up.

"When I was young, I would volunteer for the role of the priest when my friends and I played games," he said.

"I used a blanket as a substitute for a priest's habit and kitchen and cold coffee or soft drinks to substitute bread and wine," Manalaki added, cashing in the recollection.

But God's plan for him became clearer after he received his first communion at age 14.

"I told God, I want to serve you but I don't know how. When I can promise you is that I will use my life serving you and serving others," Manalaki recalled.

"I wanted to live a holy life that was devoted to serving people," he added although he admitted that he hasn't what he felt that a little.

Manalaki said he used to lead a "normal" life. He entered into relationships but he was not happy. "I felt I was not making God's only one's design. I found that in the back of my mind, I knew that the relationships would not last because I was really determined to serve Him."

The second in a brood of five, Manalaki from had the idea of entering priesthood to his family right after high school.

Opposition from parents

Although his parents disagreed and encouraged him to pursue a different career, he said he was taken out because of a person, with or without their support.

"They didn't pay for my tuition. There was a point when I was almost booted out of the seminary because of unpaid school bills," he said.

"But when God tells you, He finds ways," he quickly added, saying that eventually, he was able to get a scholarship. "Instead of feeling disheartened, I took my family's displeasure as a challenge. It only strengthened my decision to follow my vocation."

Manalaki said his parents have had a change of heart when he was already pursuing his service (seminarian).

After his ordination in May, Manalaki had assignments outs in Manila before taking his current assignment as parish priest and finally, being assigned to Batasan, Manalaki also lived with and provided livelihood skills training to urban poor families in Metro Manila.

"I believe that the love of God must be accompanied with the love of neighbor," he said, adding that his affinity to children was in going to other people. "And seeing the smile and relief on the people's faces is really fulfilling," he said.

Those interested in Rev. Fr. Reynaldo Zenki Mendoza's work can write to him at No. Domingo de Guzman Cathedral, 1 Librado St., Kaybiga-Bahay, Bacoor, 2000 (Bahay at e-mail him at samsenki@yahoo.com

FOR FR. Reynaldo "Zenki" Mendoza, happiness comes when giving to the poor and needy.

Metro Briefs

Man nabbed for 'lewitik'

THE POLICE yesterday arrested a man who reported has pestered after he accidentally set off 30 rolls of "lewitik," a type of firecracker, in Caloocan. Alberto Sarmiento Lasa, 32, of P. Tuazon Street, Caloocan, was held responsible for the firecrackers when sparks from it you the market he was looking around of the other firecrackers. The incident occurred at around 9 a.m. near Cosme Market on Gonzalo Street. Renato Pilar, 29, a resident of the area was injured along with The suspect's kin, Antonio Cortez, 57, who declared to be accompanied. Doctors were assigned at the Manila City Prosecutor's Office with multiple physical injuries. Meanwhile, Alberto Mayor Alberto Lim said that the city's Fire's Extinguishment at 19 Alcazar Bahay at Ilagan Subdivision on Quezon Boulevard whereas fireworks display will further in 2008.

Allison M. Lopez

The WORLD

Elise Lawrence B. Glocer

Who killed Bhutto? We may never know

ISLAMABAD—AS WITH OTHER ASSASSINATIONS in Pakistan's bloody political history, the world may never know who killed Benazir Bhutto—but there is no shortage of potential culprits to choose from, analysts say.

There could be almost as many motives as well, in a country with a murky nexus of intelligence agencies, dozens of Islamic militant outfits, hundreds of tribal clans and an army whose ranks contain its own core cadres of Pakistani life.

While the government says quick to point a finger at al-Qaeda, that name is little more than a convenient catch-all for a staggering array of militant groups, and the reality is rarely more complex, analysts say.

The government's key suspects—militants, subsidies trained by them to fight in Kashmir or jockey for power in Afghanistan, leave the state apparatus itself with questions to answer, they say.

"It is common knowledge that some of the intelligence agencies have undermined Bhutto with political and sectarian groups, dating back to the days of military intervention in Afghanistan," said political analyst Hasan Askari.

"Even after Pakistan joined the global war on terrorism, there was always doubt whether these agencies really severed their connections to militant elements," said Askari, former head of political science at Punjab University.

The leaders of Pakistan's three intelligence agencies are all current or retired members of the military, which has run the country for more than half its existence—and has its own clandestine history with the Bhutto family.

After Bhutto survived the worst terror attack in Pakistan's history in October, she blamed elements of the regime of Gen. Zia ul-Haq, who toppled her father from power in 1977 and had him hanged two years later.

President Pervez Musharraf was head of the military when he seized power in a 1999 coup and remained army chief until just over a month ago, giving up a lifelong career in uniform only after intense pressure to bring Pakistan constitutionally under civilian rule.

His decision to become a US ally after Sept. 11 enraged Islamic hardliners, who have everything to gain from fostering turmoil, which threatens the state's ability to rein them in.

"There was a lot to have a safe haven in Pakistan from where they can carry out an agenda of radical Islam," said a top government counterterrorism official who could not be named.

"Their other plan is to eliminate leaders and strike at vulnerable—could deeply hurt state institutions," the official said, "Their long-term plan is to destabilize Pakistan, so that would give them space to move around."

Adding to the mix of homegrown militants, Pakistan's northern tribal areas became a safe haven for the hardcore Jihadi leadership of al-Qaeda, including Osama bin Laden, after they escaped from Afghanistan in November 2001.

From this nearly mountainous region al-Qaeda has plotted a global terrorist war that has included two attempts to kill Musharraf and the 7/7 London underground bombings.

If the jumble of disparate militant groups may once have had different goals, they were united by a hatred of Bhutto, whose secularist populist appeal and pro-US stance were a major obstacle to their objectives.

Analysts say her elimination—capping a year of unprecedented militant violence that has left more than 900 people dead—can only be seen to undermine Musharraf's assurances that he has brought radicals under control.

"Ultimately, government have to accept responsibility for the circumstances under which such acts take place," said Rasul Baksh Rais of the Lahore University of Management Sciences.

"Although the government would not appear to benefit from Bhutto's assassination, it cannot absolve itself of responsibility," Rais said. "The Musharraf government has many questions to answer." AFP

SUPPORTERS of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto mourning at the grave of their leader in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh town in Larkana, Pakistan, Dec. 28. —

TV shows photos of '2 attackers'

ISLAMABAD—A PAKISTANI TELEVISION channel broadcast on Sunday grainy still pictures of what it said appeared to be two men who attacked and killed opposition leader Benazir Bhutto.

Former Prime Minister Bhutto was killed in a gun and bomb attack on Thursday as she stood up through the sun roof of her bullet-proof vehicle to wave to supporters at the end of an election rally in the city of Rawalpindi.

The government has blamed al-Qaeda.

Dawn News Television showed three pictures it said it had obtained from its own TV camera footage.

One showed two men standing in the crowd outside the rally ground before Bhutto left.

One was a close-cut young man wearing sunglasses and a dark shirt under a brown coat. Behind him stood a man with a white shawl over his head, who Dawn said was believed to be the bomber.

Two other photographs showed the clean-cut man pointing a pistol at Bhutto as she left the rally.

He appeared to be about 3 meters from Bhutto, standing on the left of her vehicle, pointing the gun with his right hand at the front-seated woman.

And he then said three shots were fired at Bhutto as masses had to a suicide bomber set off explosives. As well as Bhutto, 23 people were killed.

Authorities have not said how many assailants they believed were involved.

Some police and government officials declined immediate comment saying a four-officer team was handling the investigation.

The government said Bhutto was killed when the force of the blast smashed her head into a lever on the sun roof, which fractured her skull.

Her party dismisses that as "facilitators" saying she was killed by a bullet in the head.

Doctors did not carry out a post-mortem of Bhutto's body on the instructions of her family, officials say.

The Interior Ministry said on Saturday her body could be released for more tests. After party wanted. Reuters

France prepares to stub out smoking in cafés

PARIS—FRENCH SMOKERS have just a few more hours to indulge their habit in public before the country joins one-third of its neighbors on Wednesday in imposing a complete tobacco ban in bars, restaurants and nightclubs.

What was hotly regarded as a country's inalienable right comes to a definitive end just after the start of the New Year, and though some fear the demise of France's cherished cafe culture, few predict any serious opposition.

"The decree has been ready for more than a year. Everyone knows it is going to be applied. No one can say they've been duped," said Health Minister Roselyne Bachelot.

The outright ban follows February's prohibitions of smoking in offices, schools, hospitals, stations, airports and trains, and places the country alongside Ireland, Britain, Italy and Spain in the European vanguard against public smoking.

The 12-month time lag to a "places of entertainment and conviviality" was to allow owners to install—if they wished—specially insulated and ventilated smokers' rooms, an expensive option that very few have taken up.

Bachelot calls the ban means that as the clock chimes midnight on December 31, "there will be time to stub out your cigarettes and cigars or ends a fine, but in practice the government has said there will be no attempt to enforce it on Jan. 2.

Some cafés and restaurants have already capitulated to no smoking, with some claiming it has brought in more customers, and the government points to the experience in Italy where it says there was a 20-percent increase in turnover when bars and restaurants banned tobacco.

But opposition has come from groups representing tobacconists and café-owners, who fear smoking customers will prefer to socialize at home. They are asking for special dispensations to stay open where the village "café-tabac" is part of the social fabric. AFP

Bin Laden says US seeks to exploit Iraqi oil

DUBAI—AL-QAEDA LEADER Osama bin Laden accused Washington of planning to take control of Iraq's oil and urged Iraqis to reject efforts to rebuild a US-backed national army government there.

The radical Islamic rebel vowed in a recording posted on an Islamist website on Sunday to expand jihad to liberate all Muslim land "from the (Mediterranean) sea to the (Arabian) sea" and said his group will never recognize Israel.

"American seeks, alongside its agents in the region, to create an allied government ... that would accept in advance the presence of major US bases in Iraq and give the Americans all they wish of Iraq's oil," he said in his 56-minute recording.

The Saudi-born militant said the rearranged Iraqi government was also meant to help Washington "calm the resistance" (its regime) with help from allies such as Israel-Arabia.

"The government of Riyadh is still playing its wicked roles," he said. According Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah as the United Israel "third agent."

Referring to a Saudi path to Riyadh to help Palestinian militant groups reconcile, he said Riyadh was part of a scheme to lure Islamist Palestinian militant group Hamas away from its jihadist roots.

"I assure our kin in Palestine especially that we shall expand jihad Israel... We will not recognize a state for the Jews ever even an inch of Palestinian land," said Bin Laden.

Bin Laden did not mention encounters al-Qaeda was behind Thursday's assassination of Pakistani opposition leader Benazir Bhutto. A Qaida-allied militant leader has denied involvement.

Bin Laden took a swing at Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah Lebanese Shiite militant group for accepting the expansion of a United Nations force in Lebanon after the Shiite group's war with the Israel-state in 2006.

The peacekeepers sent to Lebanon after the war were there to "protect the Jews," said Bin Laden, whose group has long been a school of Islam that sees Shiites as heretics.

Bin Laden said Washington was planning to form a new Iraqi national-unity government and warned that those who took part would be earning their bodies on Islam.

Some Arabs pulled out of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government in protest over his visit this year, accusing it of being too sectarian. Reuters

Concerns grow over delayed Colombia hostage deal

VILLAVICENCIO, COLOMBIA—A humanitarian-sponsored plan to free three hostages held by Colombian rebels was stalled by the guerrillas' failure to reveal their location, and frustration Tuesday as Hugo Chavez said it may succeed if the stalemate drags on.

Concerns were growing on Sunday about the mission to release two former Colombian presidents and the young son born to one of them in captivity as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, withheld their whereabouts after weeks of promising to free them.

GONZALEZ as

Chavez negotiated the rescue effort with the FARC and had initially hoped to see the release take place on Thursday.

"If this were to drag on three or four or five days, for security reasons, it could collapse and we would have to think of something else," he said late on Saturday.

The leftist Honduran was not the only one voicing concern.

"The question is why is it taking so long for the FARC to give the coordinates. There were the cases who proposed this hostage release," a senior Colombian government official told Reuters, asking not to be identified.

Others involved in planning the handover said there was still time for the FARC to say where it was keeping Consuelo Gonzalez, Clara Rojas and her son Emmanuel, who was born in captivity to a guerrilla fighter and is thought to be 4 years old.

"We do not have the coordinates but we could get them at any time and then we expect the mission is more strong," said Yesid Arteta, spokesperson for the International Committee of the Red Cross, which is helping coordinate the hand-over. Reuters

Surprise, surprise: New York has become one of US' safest cities

NEW YORK—AUTOMESHINGS, the nation's largest city is among the safest.

Homicides in New York are expected to fall below 500 this year, fewer than in any year since reliable record-keeping began 44 years ago. Mayor Michael Bloomberg said his police commissioner, Ray Kelly, would surely get each other on the hook and call it a day. Last-

ably they have instead pledged to bring more police round to neighborhoods that have so far eluded success.

The mayor and Kelly plan to send all 914 officers from the new class of graduates overseas to join other officers assigned to Bloomberg's areas. This will essentially double the Operation Impact force, which marches new recruits with seasoned officers and is credited with helping to reduce crime in nearly all categories, including rapes and robberies.

New technologies have paid off, as have innovative tactics: police, such as particularly checking houses where there have been reports of domestic violence. Homicides in that category alone dropped by one-third.

The overall statistics can all the more amazing because the department has been operating with limited resources. Even as the city continues to grow in population, with record numbers of visitors, the police force, at 35,400 officers, remains well below its authorized strength of nearly 38,000.

And everything has suffered in part because New York offers the worst starting annual salary in any major city, $25,316. Newly

hired recruits in the graduating class did not make it, many because of the financial stress.

The best spots where new officers will be dispatched are predominantly minority neighborhoods in central Brooklyn, the Bronx, and parts of Manhattan and Queens. The police want elite special ones to protect the civil rights of residents, most of whom are law-abiding. Kelly's choice of venue for his announcement—Rockwell's 10th Precinct—suggested that he intends to take that issue seriously.

The commissioner noted that the number of murders had dropped on there in a precinct from 1,161 murders every year to 103 deaths every year. That's the kind of success every corner of New York deserves. New York Times

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SMART
THE POWER TO LEAD

SPORTS

Editor Rodolfa S. Maldonado Assistant Editor Francis T. J. Chiong

PCSO whipping cop and incredible fightback and crushing victory, these hardly fleeting Phoe of Harbour Centre's must this very hours of final-hour title wins on corner court like no one else can.

Harbour five nails record fourth crown

Batang Pier rally from 19 pts down

By Jasmine M. Payo

HARBOUR CENTRE PULLED OFF AN UNBELIEVABLE TURN-around yesterday and became the first team in PBL history to capture four straight championships.

After spoiling Hapee's perfect record out the other day, the Batang Pier went all the way with a dramatic overtime 94-88 win over the Complete Protectors in Game 3 of the Wilcon Youngster Energy Drink Cup 4th Asian Conference.

"What can I say, the boys just never gave up," said coach Joseja Gallent. "They really tried their best to win. We were down, but the players didn't seem to give up. It's just the heart of the champions."

MOST VALUABLE: TY Tang

Harbour rallied from a 16-point deficit in the last nine minutes of regulation, forged the submission at 78-all with 4.8 seconds left on a split free throw by TY Tang then took the lead for the first time—and for good—early in the extension behind the player who blew Game 1 away with two unanswered free throws.

"This is Harbour Centre basketball, we never say die, we're never out of it," said PBA Asi Sidney Mercado, who won the Finals Player prize after notching 14 of his 20 points in the last eight minutes of action.

"We just wanted to go out there and attack, be aggressive and see what will happen, and it happened," added Bienvenido, whose free throw finally allowed Hapee to take Game 1, 72-69, Thursday and extend their unbeaten run to 12.

Wilcon ended Hapee's perfect run with a 73-59 rout the other night to pave the way for the winner-take-all finale, which proved the result of a thriller that Harbour Centre owner Hilton Bautista was rushed later to the hospital due to throat palpitations.

Batang Pier initially rattled by as many as 19 points, 56-37, early in the third quarter before outscoring the Complete Protectors, 42-20, for the rest of the regulation period to forge overtime.

"We just kept coming back," said Tang, who was honored as the Finals Most Valuable Player.

Mercado opened the extension by completing a three-point play that gave Batang Pier their first taste of the lead at 93-91, then later scrambled with Tang to give Harbour a 90-84 advantage with only 49.6 seconds left.

Mercado finished with 20 points while Tang added 13 like Nino Muhlach and Jervis Gaos.

"After our Game 1 loss, we were still confident," said Gallent. "But like what happened in the semifinals (versus San Mig Coffee), we came back. We took it game at a time."

PBA-Asi Sidney Mercado, who was instrumental in the Complete Protectors' eighteen was earlier in the tournament, proved the guru this time.

With Hapee preserving a slim 76-77 lead, Norwood banged two foul shots that would have given the Complete Protectors more breathing room in the last 7.6 seconds of the fourth quarter.

Seconds later, Tang came up with the equalizing free throws that gave Harbour a new lease on life.

The Complete Protectors, who registered a blistering 60-percent shooting clip in the first half, seemed to have the crown in their grasp as Mark Bedhoran, who shot a game-high 22 points, Larry Rodriguez, Jhod Jamilla and Norwood flashed superb hoops.

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Ring expert sees Pacquiao stopping Marquez

PACQUIAO: Technical knockout victory

AN AMERICAN BOXING EXPERT SEES Manny Pacquiao crashing an end to his rivalry with Mexican Juan Manuel Marquez by scoring a technical knockout win in their rematch on March 15.

Michael Marley, executive editor of the website boxingscene.blogspot.com included this prediction in his "Guesses to Impress in 2008" list.

He said that Pacquiao, the WBC International super featherweight champion, would beat foe once for once this year.

Marley predicted that the 29-year-old Gen. Santos City southpaw, while behind on points, would "relive Ron Marquez and win by TKO in the closing seconds of the penultimate round."

The erstwhile bitterness (Pacquiao 349-3-2, 34 KOs) and Marquez (40-3-1, 35 KOs) existed March 15 at the Mandalay Bay Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Their first meeting, in May 2004 at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, ended in a draw. Pacquiao (one Marquez down three times in the first round but the judges eventually ruled a split draw.

Marley likewise predicted that Pacquiao would outpoint WBC lightweight holder David Diaz in September when he moves up to 135-pound class.

The 5-foot-6 Diaz, a Marquez clubbing fan-boy in 140 lb and stopping Britain's Ricky Hatton in nine rounds.

Diaz is set to defend his title against a still undetermined opponent in the co-feature of Pacquiao-Marquez bout.

If Diaz and Pacquiao win, Top Rank promoter Bob Arum said he would arrange a fight between the two in July.

Arum added that another Pacquiao win may lead to a battle against Golden Boy Promotion boss Oscar De La Hoya.

"Manny is going to knock him out," Arum declared of the target in today's newsbeat. "Manny feels that he has really improved dramatically since that first fight with Marquez and that Marquez has gone backwards."

Pacquiao last defeated six Mexican fighters in a row, including Erik Morales two times and Hector Antonio Barrera.

Reuters, S. Austria

RAMOS (left): Cagayan's Rico Palacio looks to box off Hapee's Mark Barkman in the fourth quarter of yesterday's PBL championship game at the Rizal Coliseum. Ramos had 23 points.

Nanan All Star five nips RP's Telecoms

By Roy Luarca

SAN JUAN, CHINA—FIFTH AVENUE TELECOMS' THIRD RALLY FELL SHORT Saturday night, allowing the Nanan All Stars to score a 78-67 victory in the 7th Zheng Chenggong Cup international basketball tournament here.

The loss dropped the Filipino team to the sixth spot in the tournament at 1-3 and left the defending champions with the tough task of sweeping their three remaining games to win a repeat of the title won by the Laguna Lakers in 2006 and a Pacific basket repeat in 2005.

They will try to get back on track against Team Spurs of Indonesia, which is powered by national players and is celebrating after two games, Sunday night.

In other games Saturday, Indonesia stunned Macau, 90-71, and Hong Kong dumped Singapore, 82-66, in Macau City.

Visibly tired after scoring in this chilly muddy-producing town barely three hours before the game, the Filipino still managed to threaten as it left with still a minute left behind Hosain Zapata and Luis Dalupang.

But the taller Chinese kept their poise with Jiayi's 6-foot-6 center Xie Saocheng on a short stint then added two free throws for 69-64 following a field goal from Jiayi's Ye Jun. Michael Andre Rudolph.

Zapata, 5th Avenue's top scorer with 28 points on a 9-for-10 toppling of Macau's Pedro Mark with a three-point jumper in the last seconds, 66-67.

But Daniel David was found to foul for Yi Cai in the ensuing play and the Chinese made the most out of his free throws for the final score.

"Responding maligning (it) we with," complained East Avenue playing coach Anand Mendiola, referring to the prevailing 32-degree temperature. "Salamigas ang kanyar namin yung suitcases. Dito hindi pa! stiff when we are on the inside."

The 29-year-old Zapata, a three-time national player, teamed up with 18 points, seven rebounds and four assists while Dalupang and former pro Rendo Lim added 13 points each.

With apology Wei De Long to the Ming end, the Chinese kept the pressure. 5th Avenue caged at key throughout, posting their biggest lead of 47-36 midway in the third quarter.

The victory rebutted the Chinese, boasting an average ceiling of nearly 6-foot-6, both into contention in the sixteam, single-round tournament.

They absorbed a 68-62 beating from a pesky Hong Kong side in the youngest members on Nanan City on Friday.

The 6-foot-3 forward Wei powered the Chinese with 20 points and a tournament-high 19 rebounds. Ying Xiao Dong contributed 16 points, including four triples, along with Ding Zhen Yong.

FIBA Asian champion of Ge Mingwen steers Basketball League, together with Yuang Hyun of Singapore Blinding night before facing its next hurt against Hong Kong, the 2003 runners-up of the quadrennial event, on New Year's Day.

The scores:

NANAN ALL STARS (78)—Wei 19, Wang 12, Ye Ding 10, Xie 6, Jiayi 8, Jin 97, Li Zhaoyili 3, Hu Jiayi 3, Zhao Chen 7, Huang 7, Mendiola 4, Zhenhao 2.

5TH AVENUE (67)—Zapata 28, Dalupang 10, Lim 10, Chen Chun 7, Huang 7, Mendiola 4, Zhenhao 2.

Quarters: 17-10, 28-22, 47-36, 78-67

A book for a sports monument

BARE EYE

Marvin Trinidad

ZALDY MALIPOL, FORMER PRESident of the Philippine Olympic Committee, is coming out with a book, "Memoirs," a celebration of the many years he has dedicated to Philippine sports.

As retired Army lieutenant colonel, Malipol has grammarly lent an exemplary hand to the foreword to his book which, he said, is due out in February of the next.

Power dinner.

The big heroes in the world of Asian Malipol will not notwithstanding sports superstars.

Malipol will look not and field competitors.

They are not the incredible contenders who led it over battlegrounds or through these arenas were created to be their exclusive stage.

Their names may not ring a bell to modern day spectators: Simon Perez de Corbuchi, Jerry Binasbas, Manuel Luis Quezon, Luis Villoria and, yes, the unforgettable Dr. Regino Ozaeta.

These great men fought a struggle battle which Malipol continues to pursue in his gap winner of his quest, a crusty Don Quixote with neither horse nor armor, seeking the restoration of some of noble Olympic ideals in our overly politicized sports landscape.

* * *

Malipol no longer packs the old knockout, his punches could now be only limp, insignificant pinns, but he nonetheless fights in his unconventional way.

He would flay off critical comments against great countercriticism and shameless politicking in Philippine sports.

He cares less smiling statements on how traditional sports of Asian should be properly conducted.

He had been called names. But the big List of the Patriots, coined by kinder spectators, has proved most fitting.

* * *

In fact, several prizes he had earned in various capacities at the San Juan de Letran College, where the year saw the unblinking physical education director, left by deserved something equal to a monument for his contributions to Philippine sports.

Not that they could not build one for him, but these patriots tend never to with a better, safer idea.

They goaded and constrained the national thinkers, short of busting his arms, to write a book.

The result is an extraordinary book written by an extraordinary gentleman.

Of course, Malipol knows his subject like the back of his hand.

He served twice as president of the Philippine Olympic Committee, highest sports post in the land, in 1994 and 1999.

* * *

It's also worth noting that the young Malipol, obviously bared by the popularity and rapid commercialism of basketball, once eared up as a Carlton Knight, unsatisfactorily before the cameras and the short blonder has skippered by the great Lauro Manuel. His contemporaries included Louie Tolentino and the venerable Crispin Aldinos, who would later take a bow based in the improvement of basketball officiating boondocks.

Doctor, Malipol said, he had also tried his luck in boxing and football.

But he said he actually abandoned his dream of excelling in basketball following the rise of the tall, mighty Caloy Loyzaga, the Great Difference who, then playing for Manuel Quezon, promptly put him in his proper place when their paths crossed at a satellite in Sta. Mesa, Manila.

Well, it's history now how Malipol pursued a more important, if less flamboyant career in sports, through a gallant advocacy anchored on the conservation of Olympic ideals in the Philippines.

* * *

He still has book, a product of long labor, autobiographical, chiefly assuming readers enjoyable chapters on the adventures of a controversial, persuasive fighter for purely his sport, another sacred cody in steel and dedication to the legendary Dr. Regino Ozaeta, former executive secretary of the original Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation (PAAF).

Malipol knows the early years of the PAAF, who had American William Rohrs as its first president, before the arrival of Manuel Luis Quezon as first Filipino head of the prestigious federation.

The book touches on storied subjects, a rich in details on the tumultuous facilitation of sports leaders, led by Cojuangco, father of the modern Olympics, and great International Olympic Committee heads like Brundage and Killanin.

To repeat, this undoubtedly is a remarkable achievement from a mystery, identifies reference, who's often dubbed a cynical and vulnerable.

Selfish, shameless politicians on Philippine sports won't like it.

Malipol's book is a shining counterweight.

* * *

LET'S REVERSE. The awesome of Mang Ramon Rivera, a former philanthropist who again lose a generous hand for the season of last week's gift-giving for your favorite kids in Bulacan. As per Gay, was telequelled as Rivera. Our question:... On Dec. 28, the Manila Cricket Basketball Federation opened its 2007 Christmas basketball tournament at the Marikina Sports Center. There are two divisions, Pluto for 7-8 years old, and Mainland for 9-years old and under. The tournament, which runs until Jan. 6, involves an barangays, says coordinator Ricky Reynoso, who name their pakaing for baseball is "by-out (fifty-fifty)."

SPORTSWATCH

FEU Team A, Nava, Paloma sweep Asian varsity chess

Final standings:

FIDE MASTER ROSERLYN NAVA (#2) (Jeyson Rose/Philippines) topped the individual division while leading by Garden University Team A to the championship in the event. 2200 Palawan Manor (ACC) Grand Avenue Open Challenges Grand Inter-Varsity Chess Championships at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur.

Nava, a graduate of the national training pool, split the point with International Master Oliquel Dimalibot at four-board Islamic University to top the event division.

Paloma settled for a draw with compatriot at Ateneo Regular Varsity of NU Team B to take the runners-up spot.

Nava and Paloma scored up with seven wins, seven and a draw each for 7 ½ points. They won 1,000 (roughly P42,000) cash, gold medal each.

FEU Team A, which also had Lolit Magdalena and John Rusel Mendiola, amassed 27 ½ overall net points to produce the team to Ateneo Regular Varsity of NU Team B to claim the top prize of P 1,000 (roughly).

Nava's only loss was dealt by fellow Filipino Mikki-Anne Rosario Ly—GM Singapore in the fourth round while Paloma scored to Dawn Ho Tan Mun of NEA in the opening round.

Rosario, L. Gile

BY TOP CHOICE

Lagman, Asistio dispute Milo Cup 12-under title

TOP SEED JACOB LAGMAN whitewashed Kyle Perpia, 6-0, 6-0, and second pick Hans Asistio routed Vince Salas, 6-1, 6-2, yesterday to set up a championship showdown in the boys' 12-under division of the 2007 Milo Super Tennis Cup at the Philam Homes Tennis Club in Quezon City.

Jones Peña routed Kim Tomarong, 6-1, 6-1, and Clyrone Mansueto blasted Rubens Gael Joseph, 6-1, 6-0, to enter the girls' 14-under final.

In the boys' 14-under bracket, Andres dela Cruz needed a third-set super tiebreak to oust Enrique Perez, 5-6, 6-3, 12-10. The top-seeded Dela Cruz takes on Dino Ildefonso, who booted Kevin Mamaril, 6-1, 6-2, for the title.

No. 2 seeded upset No. 1 seed Nene Hosaka, 7-6, 7-5, to gain the boys' 12-under semifinals, along with Atlas Lagman, 6-1, 6-1, since new Sept Sinagpore.

Patrick Arevalo ousted Joey Mamaril, 6-2, 6-4, and forged a clash with Leander Lukaco, 6-7 (5), 6-4 victor over Dennis Bolivar.

MABL CHAMPS

Members of the Mighty Marshals pose for posterity after winning the MABL Champions League by the second straight time. They are coaches Lito Vargas and Noah Victoria, Marlon Yu, Genoh Go, Ronnie Ong, Clark Yuvienco, Eric Yu, Noel Fu, Dennis Ong, Geo Lee, Marvin Sison, Nonoi Evangelista. In the front row are Angelo Wangchuking, Patrick Ferrer, Pete Dejesus Atkinson, Keith Wangchuking, Joseph Wong, Basil Dee, Nick Dy and Spencer Uy.

Inquirer Sports' top choices for 2007

10 of the best

Boxers, golfers shine; SEA Games bets flop

By Francis TJ. Cubias

IF IT WERE UP TO MANNY PACQUIAO'S FANS, THE definitive moment of Philippine sports in the year 2007 should have been captured this way in a photograph: The Filipino ring sensation, sweat dripping down a finely chiseled body that had earlier struggled to make the weight, standing over a fallen Marco Antonio Barrera, yet another Mexican Hall-of-Famer who had hoped to conquer the Pacman.

Instead, it ended up with Pacquiao and Barrera caught in a crappled embrace a brutal new friendship, moments after the Mexican-turned-manager—oh-so-hot with the help of a little foul punch toward the end of their fight—in any on his feet for 12 rounds against the tech-hammer like punches of the Filipino.

It seemed that in the midst of the knockout hopes and the flurry of pugilistic exchanges, only Freddie Roach saw what made Pacquiao's conquest of Barrera special.

"Manny found stuff and dressed good footwork, which was what we worked in," said the American trainer. "Manny cut him off and moved him to the right, which was a beautiful thing."

The people manning the business figures desk saw the same thing and voted Pacquiao's entry—and that of the country's newly minted world champion—as the year's sports highlight.

There, in magenta, are the numbers in bold—and the secret—of Filipino exploits in the sporting arena in 2007. The figures don't make for 10 best stories according to their impact on local sports:

1. Donaire, 3 others world's best

Very few had heard of Nonito Donaire until the morning of July 6, when his story landed on the front pages of newspapers. The report, coming out of Bridgeport, Connecticut, stated that the Filipino-American had just given the Philippines a world title.

Donaire knocked out the undefeated Vic Darchinyan in the fifth round of a scheduled 12-rounder, shattering his opponent's International Boxing Federation (IBF) flyweight title.

On that same day, another unbeaten-but-lighter under-the-radar boxer was becoming the country's new hero for the country. Florante Condino downed tremendous fighting heart in flooring champion Muhammad Rachman twice en route to snatching the IBF mini-flyweight (105.1b) crown in a split decision, right in the opponent's hometown of Jakarta.

That kicked off what's to be a banner year for pro boxing in the country.

Local Pelaloon became the third Filipino world champion in two months, on Aug. 12, dethroning Mexican World Boxing Organization (WBO) bantamweight champion Hozerey Gamoling with a seventh-round knockout at the Arco Arena in Sacramento, California, during the Philippines-vs-Mexico boxing duel meet, dubbed as the World Cup.

The 26-year-old former WBC super flyweight champion put away the Mexican for good with one punch to the body late in the seventh round.

And then later in the year, Donaire (9) once topped the IBF world title spree by forging a unanimous decision triumph over previously undefeated Ferdinando Monteliegro to regain the IBF mini-flyweight crown at the Plaridel Gym Hotel in Cebu.

For sheer hope—and enthusiasm—none of those beats came even close to matching the ecstasy of the Pacquiao-Barrera match held in Las Vegas on Oct. 7. Or even Pacquiao's fight against Mosley in Texas both on Apr. 22 in San Antonio, Texas. Heck, these two failed to grab the same kind of spotlight as the battle Pacquiao waged—and lost—against the wispy Chaiwbe Gaviolo for a seat in Congress.

But Dave Aglipa knew the score during Pacquiao's battles, those inside the ring, surely lasted, at least for the moment, a world title.

Pacquiao is scheduled to digest on with reigning WBC super featherweight king Juan Manuel Marquez—the last of the Mexican greats standing in the way of his declared aim to the super featherweight ranks.

2. Bittersweet basketball

After years of putting up with a lynx-functional Basketball Association of the Philippines (ABC), sports officials and other major stakeholders of the sport decided to unite and take drastic action.

After years of mudslinging, hand and relations and politicizing, basketball finally found a new federation to root its hopes on: The Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP).

After a Lung Congress that patched up the stands in a fractured basketball brotherhood, the international basketball federation (FIBA) informed SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan that the federation was finally lifting its ban on Philippine participation in international tournaments. It was a feat that lasted two years and denied the country a gold-medal bid in the 2005 Manila Southeast Asian Games basketball competition.

But the light of the inspiring breakthrough faded to gray in the shadow the one ugly glaring reality in basketball in the country: While Unday Congressman made for good photo-ops and pregame hatchings, they don't put the country any closer to its cherished dream: An Olympic participation again.

"We have to be patient," Pangilinan said then. "The problem in basketball isn't going to be fixed overnight. It's going to take a really determined effort to improve Philippine basketball."

After a successful finish—first that flattered the country's hoop mighty—only to the freshmen's bum regime—the country's best shot at the Olympics came up via the Fiba Asia qualifier in Tokushima, Japan.

There, the Olympic dreams of a nation has crashed under the wealth of Asian talent.

With China seeded into the Olympics by virtue of its hosting the 2008 edition, Philippine hopes soared as an extra slot was made available for Asia. All the country needed to do was win the qualifier.

Unfortunately, even after an inspiring victory over a revered core Chinese squad, the Philippines left their locked out of the race during the elimination round by a pair of losses to doing Middle Eastern powers including Iran, which went on to win the Asian title and the Beijing ticket that went along with it.

3. Sinking to the depths of SEA

Miguel Molina will always be remembered as the one last that ruined the country's participation in the 24th Southeast Asian Games, which will go down as the edition of the biennial meet where a defending champion unprecedented to come home than its ultimate would get to the finish line.

After churning 111 gold medals in 2005, the one the Philippines hosted the small-time meet among members of the Southeast Asian community, the country would only secure fourth even collecting just 41 gold medals to finish in ninth place.

"We prepared hard, but the way prepared harder," POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco said POC chief Williams "Butch" Ramirez both said.

Molina was half of the main story of that SEA Games. And he was a story to be proud of. Trained in the United States, Molina won four gold medals as the country proved its might in swimming competitions.

The other half of the story? The host team—and into a gold medal, there was a bowling squad that competed in a trial of controversy and paid dearly for it. So every Cecil Mamiit who fought to stay ready to fill a well-funded but and vote the certain singles gold, there was an ultimate equal that left way short of expectations.

4. Frankie and Junk

For the longest while, Philippine golf has been hoisted on the shoulders of the fashionable Juvanie Sunaso and Ed Arc. Inevitably Sobale, who have managed to carve their niche—however small—in the US LPGA.

Men's golf? It seemed like it was consigned to feeding off past successes of its greats.

And then this year, everything started to turn around. While Sunaso and Dobale left off the LPGA ranks, with hardly anything to show for the 2007 season, the country's male golfers started to make their mark in Asia.

Frankie Minoza and Juvic Pagunsan made CUL 28 a real letter day for Philippine golf, winning tournaments in Indonesia left off the OPGA ranks, with hardly anything to show for the 2007 season, the country's male golfers started to make their mark in Asia.

Minoza ended a six-year drought in the cash-rich Japanese Tour in the most dramatic of fashions. He proved weather that Bernie Lee Hong Iwen, claiming a victory with a birdie on the first hole of a sudden-death playoff for the ABC Championship at Ulopa gentlemen after both players ended up tied at 274.

It was the first championship in Japan for Minoza—who won the event's Philippine Open for the second time last February—since tying the Fujimedai Classic in 2001, a long drought for a man many fine qualities in the top rookery greats of the sport.

Minoza later said that he would to his hand on the PGA seniors tour once he becomes eligible for it ago-wise.

Pagunsan, on the other hand, is just at the beginning of what many expect to be a lucrative golfing career. The many-time national team standout has already made his presence felt on the Asian circuit, but had never enough a victory until he saw action in the Petrosaisa Indonesia President Invitational in Jakarta.

Ranged against the likes of Ryder Cup star Lee Westwood, the 29-year-old Pagunsan shot a blistering final round 65 to hold off Taiwanese Lin Wen-tang and Thailand's Thaid, former-up Gaganjeet Bhullar of India and Australia's Anthony Kang.

"I am speechless, it was the perfect finish for me," said Pagunsan. "I've enjoyed my time on the Asian Tour and this is what I've been waiting for in my career."

Minoza and Pagunsan received such windfalls for their achievements. Frankie's victory was worth about $230,300 (about P8.67 million) while Juvic pocketed $86,475. Pagunsan's victory also catapulted him in the Asian Tour's Fifth Order of Merit. From his spot at No. 86, Pagunsan ended the year inside the Top 20.

Junk's victory came after Antonio Murakami, whom Minoza had also erased highly, also became a first-time winner on the Asian Tour by topping the Indonesian Johor Open in Malaysia by Orabbot.

Tony Lascuña also performed strongly in the Asian circuit even as Elmo Placay and Angelo Que earned victories in the marquee edition of the Asian Golf Tour.

5. He isn't so-so, this Wesley

If the grandmaster title is clear yardstick of immortality, then Wesley So has already achieved an ageless status.

On Dec. 7, after a relatively unspectacular draw with Iranian GM Ehsan Ghaemmaghami in the final round of the Pesquera Pabay International Open chess tournament, So finally completed his GM requirements.

He thus became the country's newest grandmaster, one of two players to achieve that feat this year. Darwin Laylo, suspended earlier in the year for alleged game-fixing, also joined the ranks of chess masters of the highest order.

But what made So's feat spectacular is the fact that he won the seventh youngest chess player to achieve the status, completing his GM requirements at 14 years, nine months and 28 days old. Likewise, he is currently the world's youngest GM.

He joins Eugene Torre, who became Asia's first GM in 1974, the late Rosendo Balinas (1976), Rogelio "Joey" Antonio Jr. (1998), Buenaventura "Bong" Villamayor (2000), Nelson Mariano (2004), Mark Paragua (2005) and Enverto Gelle (2007) on the elite list of Filipino GMs.

The 27-year-old Layko clinched his GM title by handing seventh in the Asian Individual Chess Championship held at the Cebu International Convention Center in Mandaue City in September.

"This is a memorable year for local chess," said Poltoy, who is president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines. "We produced not only one but two GMs in a span of three months."

To be continued tomorrow

NONITO Donaire's title to his name as he celebrates his fifth-round knockout victory over Vic Darchinyan of Australia during the IBF flyweight championship in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Donaire's feat kicked off a world title romp for the country which ended the year with four world champions.

AFTER dominating the Banka 4th, Danny Seigle and the RP squad fail to book an Olympic berth at the Fiba Asia men's championship.

MONDAY: Sunday's MVP race

Simply perfect, these Patriots

New England nips New York Giants, sets four records

IN COMMAND: Tom Brady (No. 12), in scrubs that will soon likely earn him MVP honors, gives out instructions on the way to quarterbacking the New England Patriots to victory. AP/FILE

EAST RUTHERFORD, NEW JERSEY—IN A FITTING FINish to Boston's magical year in sports, the New England Patriots—Bill Belichick's History Boys—last night recovered from a 12-point, second-half deficit and defeated the New York Giants, 38-35, to complete the first 16-0 regular season in the history of the National Football League.

TEDY Bruschi of the New England Patriots celebrates at the end of the game. AP

Tom Brady set the record for touchdown passes in a season (50), Randy Moss set the record for touchdown catches (23), and the Patriots set the season scoring record (589 points). Now England needs another Super Bowl trophy to make its case as the best team in football history.

"It be able to win 'em all is great," conceded the ever-stoic Belichick. "I'm happy about it. It's really exciting to be part of this."

Prop gamers are likely to match the time this that took about before 79,108 witnesses at the Meadowlands. Meaningless in the standings, a game with no bearing on the playoffs, the Patriots and Giants played four quarters of bone-crushing, last-to-the-floor football.

The big play came with 11:06 left, when Brady connected with a wide open Moss on a 65-yard touchdown pass. The perfect passbirds put the Patriots ahead for good, while simultaneously booting Peyton Manning and Amy Hirt from the record book. Significant records. Just like 16-0.

"I had to throw it as far as I could," said Brady. "It doesn't get any better than that. Everyone's got to enjoy this."

It was more than stand-out TE The game was a breathtaking television event on par with the Kennedy-Nixon debates and the first snowmail. The game was broadcast on three national networks (first NFL simulcast since Super Bowl I in 1967) and aired on three television channels, plus the much-maligned NFL Network.

Now it's already on ESPN Classic and bound for the History Channel.

The Giants had been colored as cardboard cutouts, mere props in the coronation of the perfect Patriots, free from Goliath's grace. Not even close to 16-0. They seemed to slay the Buffalo after squashed the rest of the NFL in 2007.

Not quite. Not with Brady (32 of 42 passing for 356 yards) on the attack. The Patriots quarterback capped what is certain to be an MVP season with the latest in a long line of remarkable statistics.

"What I'm most proud of is that we won a playoff game on the road," said Brady.

There was a playoff atmosphere in and around Gates Stadium early in the morning. Fans were wearing Brady and Tedy Ginadis jerseys were spotted drinking beverages and huddling around open fires in the perimeter parking lot.

The Giants took the opening kickoff and marched 74 yards in seven plays to take a 7-0 lead in the fifth minute of play.

The Patriots answered with a 37-yard Stephen Gostkowski field goal, then took a 10-7 lead when Brady connected with Moss on a 4-yard TD pass at the start of the second. The TD officially made the 2007 Patriots the highest-scoring team in NFL history (previously held by the 1998 Vikings).

The Patriots regained the lead on a pair of field goals (41 and 27 yards) by Gostkowski, but Eli Manning led the Giants on an eight-play, 81-yard touchdown drive before intermission, returning three yard TD strike to Kevin Boss gave the Giants a 21-15 lead at the half.

But Brady simply wouldn't let his team lose. Superstar took the Patriots down the field on a 75-yard drive, capped by Laurence Maroney's 6-yard run to cut the margin to 28-22.

After the New England defense finally took a stand, Brady got the ball back and connected with Moss again. Twice, actually.

Seconds after Moss dropped a game-tying touchdown pass, Brady raced back to his favorite target and found Moss with open a second time. The result was the touchdown pass that shattered all the records and put the Patriots in the lead for good. New York News News Service

Sharapova tunes up in Asian tilts

SINGAPORE—RUSSIAN ERRI MARIA Sharapova plans to use low key matches in Singapore and Hong Kong to fine-tune her game before launching her Australian Open assaults.

Sharapova said her Asian strategy was an attempt to go one better at new records than Indian Open, where she lost in the final in 2007 to American Serena Williams.

The world No. 5 plans no exhibition match later Sunday in Singapore against compatriot Anna Chakvetadze and then heads to Hong Kong for the star-studded 2B Group Classic.

Six of the world's top 11 women players will line off in the Hong Kong tournament including arch-rivals Chakvetadze, world No. 8 Serena Williams and No. 4 Ana Ivanovic.

"I am going to take every single match seriously because it is like I said, my only preparation for the Australian Open," Sharapova said.

The former US and Wimbledon champion has beaten Chakvetadze in all six previous encounters, but Sharapova is not taking anything for granted. Chakvetadze broke into the top 10 rankings for the first time this year. AFP

Celtics defense makes Jazz play off-key

SALT LAKE CITY—AL PAUL PIERCE walked off the hardwood court, he shouted over and over again, "Stand was nice, road was nice."

The Celtics advanced to 3-0 on their four-game West Coast trip with a 104-96 victory over the Jazz at a sold-out EnergySolutions Arena Saturday night. Boston improved to an NBA-best 25-3 record, winning its seventh straight road game and fifth straight overall. The loss was only the third at home this season in 33 games for Utah (16-16).

"This is a big win for us, since," Pierce said, "A lot of things didn't go our way. That's a tough team to guard. They shot the ball well. They're tough at home. The crowd was really into it, but some way, some how we found ways to get the win, man. It shows a lot about this team and we're learning more and more about ourselves every day."

Pierce scored all of his game-high 24 points, including two 3-pointers and 12 free throws, in the second half. Ray Allen scored 23 points and nailed five 3-pointers, Kevin Garnett added 21 points and nine rebounds, and the bench added 24 points. After giving up 56 points in the first half, the Celtics' top-ranked defense limited Utah to 40 points in the second.

"Any time you win, especially when it's a collective group, it's big," Garnett said.

While the Celtics waited to finish Friday night, the struggling Jazz were hammered, 123-109, on the road to the Los Angeles Lakers. Andrei Kirilenko was out for last night's game with an injury. Jazz newcomer Kyle Korver, acquired in a trade from the Sixers Saturday, wasn't in uniform yet.

Jerry Sloan, longest-tenured Arena a one of the toughest places to the league for visiting teams.

"This is one of the hardest places to play," Garnett said. "This building has the perfect layout, everything. I've always found it a pleasure playing here."

Utah received its game-leading

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BUSINESS

Editor Raul D. Mercado • Assistant Editor Cecile S. Marinas

Send us your feedback: inquirer.net/businessmail/feedback • E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph

₱300-M budget surplus possible this year

Worst-case scenario is a deficit of only ₱15.1B

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT IS POISED TO incur a budget deficit of only P15.1 billion this year under a worst-case scenario, or a surplus of P300 million under the best-case forecast of the Department of Finance.

Even under the worst-case forecast, the deficit would still be much lower than the P63-billion ceiling allowed under the 2007 fiscal program. Under the "medium-case" scenario, the government would record a deficit of P9.1 billion.

The figures are the government's official estimates and were presented by Finance Secretary Margarito Teves during a meeting of the board of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) last Friday.

The Neda board includes officials from the Neda and the departments of Finance and Budget and Management. It is chaired by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"The three scenarios indicate that the target for the year would definitely be surpassed," an official from the Neda said yesterday.

The government's better-than-target fiscal performance this year was largely due to economic generated from the sale of state-owned assets. The government raised about P90 billion this year by selling its stakes in PNOC Energy Development Corp., Philippine Telecommunications Investment Corp. and Philippine National Bank as well as the old Manila airport property.

Should the government meet the best-case forecast of a P300-million surplus, then it would overperform even its 2006 target of a balanced budget. Under the medium-term program of the government, it was supposed to reduce its deficit to P63 billion this year before totally wiping it out by 2008.

Privatization revenues more than offset the shortfalls in tax and duty collections of the Bureau of Internal Revenue and the Bureau of Customs.

From January to November, the BIR collected P643.7 bil.

FISCAL BALANCE | B4

BSP expects net loss of P41B this year

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas expects to end the year with a net loss of P41 billion, a turnaround from the P3.79 billion in net profit last year, due to heavy foreign exchange losses arising from the dollar's weakening against the peso.

A recent BSP report showed that for the full year, the central bank is expecting about P67 billion in losses from foreign exchange fluctuations, a reversal of the P3.8 billion in foreign exchange gains in 2006.

But the BSP expects to trim its full-year net loss from the P41.6-billion deficit recorded from January to October partly due to a decline in interest expense on its sovereign borrowings and special deposit liability following three consecutive months of interest rate cuts, monetary officials explained.

Since October this year, the central bank has slashed its key policy rates by 75 basis points, bringing down the benchmark overnight borrowing rate to a record low of 5.25 percent.

BSP | B4

Local bourse rewrites five stock market records

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE (PSE) ended 2007 with a bang, posting five new stock market records.

PSE president Francis Lim said the market's sustained growth helped rewrite the record level of the main index, market capitalization, value turnover and proceeds from capital-raising activities.

The PSE index (PSEI), the main barometer of local stock price movements, surged 33.4 percent to 3,821.6 points at the end of 2007 from 2,983.54 in 2006.

The PSEI's closing level erased the previous record set in 1992 at 3,196.08 and marked the fifth straight year that the main index advanced.

The PSEI expanded by 43.3 per cent in 2006, by 15 percent in 2005, by 26.4 percent in 2004 and by 43.6 percent in 2003.

Annual value turnover also hit an all-time high of P1.34 trillion, a record never before seen in PSE history. At P1.34 trillion, value turnover was 131 percent more than the P572.83 billion recorded in 2006.

Average daily value turnover jumped by 130.6 percent to P5.40 billion in 2007 from P2.325 billion in 2006.

Market capitalization, or the value of listed, reached P7.98 trillion in 2007, or 11.2 percent higher than the P7.17 trillion in 2006.

Domestic market capitalization went up by 27.1 percent to P4.27 trillion to beat the previous record high of P3.35 trillion set in 2006.

Proceeds from public offerings and other means of raising capital for listed companies went up to an all-time high of P89.85 billion in 2007, or 57 percent higher than the old record record high of P57.21 billion in 2006.

"I am confident that we can sustain our market's advance, provided we keep to place our strong macroeconomic support and we shield our market from adverse developments in the domestic and global fronts," Lim said.

Turnover surged to P1.34T in '07

₱300-M budget surplus possible this year

From page B1

lion in taxes, short by P53.3 billion of its target for the 11-month period. This kept the BIR off-track to meet its full-year goal of P780.9 billion.

The failure of the BIR, the biggest revenue earner among line agencies, to meet its collection target was blamed partly on unmet economic assumptions. The BIR said the lower than-projected inflation rate dragged down collection of the value-added tax, while the drop in interest rates adversely affected collection of the tax on income from bank deposits.

Gdfist tax was assumed to cover up between 4 and 5 percent this year, but has so far settled at 2.7 percent in the first 11 months of the year.

The nonperforming of the prescind led to lower-than-target collection of import duties by the Customs bureau. The BOC said it loses P6.7 billion in potential revenue collection for every peso-d appreciation of the local currency against the dollar.

Aside from unrealized economic forecasts, collection inefficiency, corruption and dishonesty among taxpayers were also blamed for the revenue run collection.

Cautious trading seen

From page B1

AB Capital Securities said in a research note that stocks ended the year 2007 on a sour note as renewed geopolitical concerns resurfaced after the assassination of former Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index followed the regional downturn, tumbling 46.64 points or 1.3 percent to 3,621.60 on Friday. The all-shares index also ended lower by 16.37 points or 1.1 percent to 2,216.75.

"Stocks may start the year 2008 on a cautious note due to the recent events in Pakistan. Renewed geopolitical concerns have sparked a rise in world crude oil prices. Losses may be witnessed by some minor pessimizing at stocks typically more higher on the first month of the year," AB Capital Securities wrote.

Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson wrote.

Heed lessons of 1997 crisis, ADB urges East Asia

By Doris C. Dumlao

BOOMING STOCK MARKETS and property prices are making economists in East Asia feel uncomfortable, but governmental economic managers should watch out for excesses that could lead to spiraling inflation, the Asian Development Bank said.

In its special feature "Asian Markets and the Real Economy" published in its December Asia economic monitor, the ADB urged East Asia to keep in mind the lessons from the currency turmoil of 1997 that wrecked havoc on Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Malaysia and the Philippines.

"... A sustained period of asset price inflation often undermines financial sector soundness, even if these gains appear broadly justified by fundamentals," the ADB said. "While surging asset prices and increasingly sizable asset markets, the main challenge for macroeconomic policy in emerging East Asia is to prevent any financial market excesses from spilling over to goods and services markets, thus threatening macroeconomic stability."

In the case of the Philippines, the ADB noted that stock market capitalization has surged to about 125 percent of gross domestic product at present from only 50 percent in 2005.

A similar boom is seen elsewhere in East Asia, defined in the report as nations including Southeast Asia 10 which the Philippines is part of, the People's Republic of China and the four newly industrialized economies of Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore and Taiwan.

The ADB urged East Asian governments to remain on its guard on containing inflationary pressures and supervisions, and strengthening financial market regulation and supervision to address risks associated with asset price booms.

"Prudential measures, such as tightening lending standards and criteria, could limit the speculative participation that may lead to misalignment of asset prices and the consequent price collapse," the ADB said.

The ADB said tightening supervisory policies could also be helpful, "as they can target problem sectors more closely, while limiting the risk of dwelling economic growth by using monetary policy that can have long-lasting and much broader macroeconomic consequences."

Since 2003, stock prices has doubled and property values increased in East Asia, arising some concerns about surging asset prices and the potential impact on economic activity of a major correction in those markets. Property prices are rising but as well.

Higher asset prices increase the wealth of consumers, boosting consumer confidence and encouraging higher spending. Stronger asset values would then improve firms' and banks' balance sheets and thus inflate banks to charge lower premiums or increase the size of loans. At the same time, boosting such markets encourage corporate investment by lowering the cost of funding.

"Empirical research shows that the wealth effect of asset prices, though small, is significant in emerging East Asia," the ADB said.

A 10-percent rise in real stock prices was estimated to increase private consumption by about 0.2-0.3 percent, similar in magnitude to estimates for industrialized countries.

"The 1997 Asian financial crisis was a vivid example that soaring asset prices, fueled by large capital inflows, increased the leverage of borrowers and expanded investment through the financial architecture channel, contributing to financial and economic volatility," the ADB said.

New Year's debt

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

THERE IS A CURIOUS paradox that befalls those one should pay off one's debts before the start of a new year, or risk a whole year of being in debt.

I must admit I used to go by this rule myself and made a special effort to settle my debts before year's end—until I entered using credit cards and realized that there was no way I could ever get out of debt unless we borrow how big or small.

Now is our debt situation, as we leave 2007 behind and enter the new year 2008? We can look at this on two levels: The national level and the personal level. The available data tell us that the debt situation appears to be easing at the national level, though things appear to be getting worse.

The crisis then

First, the good news. We have come a long way since that time a couple of years ago when IP economists called attention to the fiscal crisis that was before us.

That was a time when the total amount spent by the government to service our public debt, combining both interest payments and amortizations of principal, was literally equivalent to 99 of every P100 of revenue collected by the government.

The numbers, which I wrote about in this space then, were P581.7 billion for interest payments and P346 billion for principal amortization, summing up to P646 billion total debt service payments.

That's 86.1 percent, or roughly 9 out of 10, of the P750 billion in revenues collected then. That was, indeed, a crisis situation by anyone's standard.

Not very many people realized how bad it really was then, as the sheer economic size of the figure is the closer to the government budget going to debt service payments, which was just about one-third or 34 percent then.

But this ignored the principal part of the debt payments, while taking the bigger chunk—interest of government bonds, which is revenue for the P320 billion budget deficit then.

Even so, this crisis was bad enough to it was, implying that for every three pesos spent by the government, only two went to "productive" spending.

Improved ratios

Fast forward to the present, and we see a totally different, and much improved, picture.

For 2007, the proposed combined debt service-to-revenue ratio is just 55 percent, and for the proposed 2008 budget, down further to 50 percent. That's down to one out of two, from 9 out of 10. It had first gone down to 82 percent, or roughly four out of five, in 2005.)

Even the share of the proposed 2008 budget going to interest payments is still set down to 20 percent or just one-fifth, from the earlier one-third.

Why this positive turnaround? Economic Credit is to both the expanded VAT and the upcoming peso. The additional P88 billion or so that the higher VAT brought in helped break us out of the vicious circle of debt we were caught in two years ago.

But it also helped a great deal that the peso value of our foreign debt payments had unfortunately gone down due to the steep drop in the peso dollar exchange rate, which went at P56 to one $ 2006 and now down to the P41 level.

Both factors have meant a windfall by us, and unfortunately both entailed a relative. It gained tremendously between us and Filipinos from debtor ones.

That is, the higher VAT for the poor (more than the rich in relative terms. Similarly, the lower exchange rate has impacted greater heavily on us Filipinos, especially workers in firms producing tradable goods and OFW families subsisting on foreign remittances.

Personal debt

The bads are to the bad news, that from on the side of personal debt.

While the public debt situation seems to be improving, there is good reason to suspect that Filipinos are both borrower in debt, and less able to pay for it. Data released last week show that credit card receivables were by 22.4 percent over last year to P186 billion, much faster than the 7.1 percent growth in overall incomes (as measured by GDP).

Along with this steep rise in indebtedness came a rise in overdue credit card receivables, which went up 17 percent over the past quarter—almost twice a hint in the overall growth in credit card debt (15.8 percent) itself.

The same picture emerges from BSP data on car loans. These grew by 22.2 percent from last year, which is good news for the car industry.

The bad news, though, is that overdue car loans went up more than twice as fast (30.8 percent) as the growth in overall car loans (15.3 percent) over the past quarter. That is, car loan borrowers are increasingly unable to pay up.

Puzzling disconnect

The overall picture that emerges, then, is that while the debt burden is easing for the government and the country as a whole, the opposite is true for individual Filipino borrowers.

This is yet another case of the puzzling "disconnect" between the seemingly good economic news at the macro level, and the not-so-good news at the level of the common Filipino.

But not nearly as puzzling, I guess, as the other New Year paradox that says you'll know a year of bad luck if the first person you meet in the new year is female, but good luck if it is a male (you first virgin you ever heard that one before?).

A happy, prosperous and debt-free (unlikely as it may seem) New Year to one and all!

(Comments are welcome at chabito@mozcom.edu.)

Alliance Fun Dollar A Fee
Growth Potential

Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts	Valuation Date 12/27/07	Valuation Date 12/28/07
PFLAC Dollar Bond Fund	1.1051	1.1050
PFLAC Global Bond Fund	1.2356	1.2355
PFLAC Peso Bond Income Fund	1.0767	1.0809
PFLAC Peso Equity Fund	1.1580	1.1596
PFLAC Balanced Fund	1.0240	1.0262

PSBank
Peso TIME DEPOSIT

Deposit Amount	Interest Rates	
In Pesos	Less than 1 Year	1 Year
100,000 - 499,999	3.50	3.50
500,000 - 999,999	3.75	3.75
1.0MM - 4.99MM	4.50	4.50
5.0MM - 9.99MM	4.75	4.75
10.0MM and up	5.00	5.00

Manage your accounts online via PSBank Remote Banking.
Open a time deposit now to win of 'P25 from her nationwide.

BSP expects P41-B loss this year

From page B1

The BSP is forecasting heavy foreign exchange losses this year given its "long" (buy) position in the dollar that resulted in the rapid buildup of its gross international reserves to record highs. The GIR is expected to hit $35 billion at the end of this year.

The GIR is a key indicator of a country's ability to cover the foreign exchange requirements of the economy, consisting of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from international institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

Given expectations of increased foreign exchange inflows, the BSP expects a higher GIR, ranging at $35.827 billion as of end-March and the GIR amounted to $32.5 billion.

The BSP is even curbing the rapid build-up in the GIR by locking up some of the foreign exchange bought from the open market to currency swap transactions. This is to prevent the excess peso from pouring into the financial system, effectively delaying the conversion of foreign inflows into the local economy.

The central bank has been forced to buy more dollars from the spot foreign exchange market to curb the peso's sharp appreciation. The peso, Asia's best performing currency this year, has gained 18 percent against the greenback to end-2007 at $1:P41.

The country has been receiving at least $1 billion in monthly foreign inflows from overseas Filipino workers. These remittances historically peak in the fourth quarter because of the Christmas season, the country's longest and most extravagant holiday.

Aside from the OFW inflows, net inflows of foreign portfolio investments—or those placed in local stocks, bonds and money market instruments—have returned to positive levels in September.

Music and games, N81 8GB plays both

Text and photos by Charles E. Rubio

IT SEEMS ONLY YESterday when Nokia launched the N-Series, the Finnish company's high-end smart phones that offer loads of advanced entertainment options and other productivity tools.

The N81 8GB is one of the most recent additions to this family that also includes the N95, N93i and 6177i.

It resembles the N95 although it features a more straightforward, one-way slider mechanism with music player controls arranged around the control navigation key and other buttons under a separate cover.

UNLIKE the N93i, the N81 8GB features a more straightforward, one-way slide mechanism.

As its name suggests, this device comes with 8 gigabytes of internal flash memory.

This feature alone makes the N81 8GB special among the N-Series, making it comparable to a lot of dedicated portable music and media players. Although it has no memory card expansion slot, users will just have to be mindful of they store in the device.

But wait, this is not where this phone excels in. Talk about gaming and this phone leaps to this score.

Revive the N-Gage

The N81 8GB sort of revives the N-Gage platform (remember N-Gage?). N-Gage classic and QD models (remember those, too?), as it comes pre-loaded with three N-Gage gaming applications... Space Impact, Asphalt 3D, and Tetris 3D.

More numbers of those in the mobile version of the 3D soccer developed by the world's leading interactive entertainment software company Electronic Arts.

The way it performs, expect many users to request Nokia to come up with similarly cool and exciting mobile games—as well as a joystick...in the near future.

Viewing screen

Well, those games would be worthless if the N81 8GB doesn't have a decent viewing screen.

Luckily, the N81 8GB is blessed with a relatively large 2.4-inch screen (16.7 million colors and 240 x 320 pixels) that can be tilted horizontally so one could play games or watch video clips more comfortably.

Indeed, as a multimedia player, the N81 8GB provides a predictably excellent experience.

Audio could be heard either through the external speakers or both sides of the N81 8GB or, more preferably through headphones plugged into the 3.5 mm headphone jack.

Music controls in front

Controls for the media player are located on the front of the phone, and it's possible to start playing music without even entering the menu.

But here's a caveat—these same controls could accidentally fire up the music while making text messages as this writer found out.

Transferring tracks in the phone should now be easy-peasy, apart from the 32 free songs, one could also use the media player's Wi-Fi to go to the Nokia "Ovi" web services platform, which offers an all new music download store at faster than 3G speeds and without incurring expensive mobile data charges.

Indeed, with its built-in Wi-Fi and wobbling-sized massive internal storage, this writer strongly recommends the Nokia N81 8GB.

Yes, it doesn't come with the expected wealth of functionality as the N95—no GPS and a lower quality camera...but with simple track storage capacity it could be your less-cost alternative to the N95.

WITH a look of dedicated boys and from-pastel hunters that double up as console-style controls, the N81 8GB is one of the first to bundle Nokia's revamped N-Gage mobile gaming platform.

RP To Become More "Techie" In 5 Years

By Rico T. Delvendes

IN THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, INnovations will enable Filipinos to manage their life through phones, travel safely in cars with "software," have "genius" appliances, know the scenic and make-up of the food we eat, and consult with doctors who have "super senses" because of such cool gadgets.

IBM said in its "Next Five In Five" report on innovations that this will be a global trend.

Former National Economic Development Authority director general Dr. Cayetano Paderanga, who now heads the Institute for Development and Econometric Analysis (IDEA) Inc., said the Philippines can play this game and it is in fact leading in some of these trends.

Trends in IT Years

• Your mobile phones will be your wallet, ticket buyer, bank, shopping buddy, and electronic ID.

• Applications in new vehicles will have sensors for avoiding collisions, choosing alternate routes, and making automatic adjustments to traffic lights.

• "Genius" appliances could alert you via SMS if you left it open when you left home, provide updates on electrical usage, and generally help you be more environmentally friendly.

• Sensor-fitted food labels will let you know where your loin of ready to cook rib-roast came from, what are the substances on it, and the type of conditions it underwent during shipping.

• Doctors will have special gadgets to see through to your organs and base the tissue variation in your headwear. They will also be able to diagnose and explore treatment options using a 3-D model of your body called an avatar.

RP potential

Paderanga said that such innovations as forecast by IBM will likely be led by Asian countries such as Korea and Japan, and not by western countries such as the US. He noted that the Philippines is already a global player in mobile innovation with mobile commerce, banking, and other services.

The next potential is in medical technology that could boost the medical tourism and offshoring businesses, he said.

"If we just continue what we have been doing for the past few years, we can innovate even the areas that we are currently not strong in, such as smart cars and eco-friendly appliances. That is, encourage competition, let the private sector invest freely, let them and the government access consumer interest in innovation, and grow the economy as five percent or more every year," he said.

Projecting images the Acer way

THESE OF THE USUAL, SOMEtimes even boring, multimedia presentations?

The most logical solution is that would be to replace it.

But a simple replacement may not be enough. What you have to replace it with must be a product of quality and innovation.

Then again, it's no just quality that should count. The product has to come from a reliable company—one that offers close value for money.

Consider Acer's DLP projectors, like the H7530, P1165E, built with Starfire WGA 640 x 600 resolution, and the P1260E with Native XGA 1024 x 768 resolution. All these are packed with some of the most innovative and practical features found in multimedia projectors in the market today.

Among its impressive features are the Acer ColorBoost technology, with optimized 6-segment color-wheel design and advanced lamp-life limitation technology for incredible color performance, the dust resistant-seal technology that supports a dust-resistant optical engine "wide-format" projects, and the Eco power-ing key for easy access to Eco, noise-like-a-Projection Management, eTerm Management, eTuner and eOptimize Management.

Other interesting stuff in their Digital Connectivity 6.0 MI part for the P1260E that delivers uncompressed digital signals and provides easy connectivity to high-definition broadcasts, Digital Connectivity DVI part for the P1165 and P5260E that supports digital high-definition signal and source connectivity to reduce noise and signal loss, and Push-to-save waiting for the user to cool down before unplugging), Auto Shutdown (for automatic safety shutdown when there's no signal), and Quick Start (15-second energy-saving power-up time).

Impressive, isn't it? But really, how good are these projectors stand out in their lightweight structures—all Acer projector models weigh less than 3 kilograms.

If you're really on the lookout for the most feature-featured, power-packed, lightweight, value-rich, multimedia projector to-your, why not try Acer projectors? They've fun to look at yet impressive enough to please your boss during office presentations, and perhaps help you bag that most interesting client. Or you may just sit back, relax, have a popcorn, and watch a blockbuster movie together with your family or that special someone in your side? Nothing gets sweeter—and better—than that.

About Acer

Acer ranks as the world's No. 4 branded PC vendor, designing easy dependable IT solutions that empower people to reach their goals and realize their dreams. Ever since taking off its standard-setting operation, Acer has focused on globally marketing its brand-name personal mobile and desktop PCs, servers and storage, LCD monitors and high-definition TVs, and handheld/smartphone devices. Acer's unique Channel Business Model is instrumental to the company's sustained success. The model encourages partners and suppliers to collaborate in a winning formula of supply-chain management, alliance building and product development with Intel technologies, competitive pricing, and quality service. Established in 1976, Acer Inc. employs 5,500 people supporting dealers and distributors in more than 100 countries. Estimated revenue for 2006 is $$13.31 billion. Please visit www.acer.com.

Top security concerns in '07; trends to watch out for in '08

THE COMPLEXITY AND EVERchanging threat landscape and the emergence of newer and more complex viruses—malware and hacking techniques—followed by the increased underworld...topped the concerns of businesses in 2007.

In addition, the proliferation of mobile computing devices...such as smart phones, thumb drives, and other peripheral devices...has increased the vulnerable access points of corporate networks for malicious activities.

2007 Internet security trends

High-profile data breaches attest to the importance of data encryption technologies and strategies and one of the key trends observed by Symantec in 2007.

In addition, the proliferation of mobile-computing and emergence of new computing devices...such as smart phones, thumb drives, and other peripheral devices...has increased the vulnerable access points of corporate networks for malicious activities.

Phishing was continued to be big in 2007, with an 8 percent increase in unique phishing sites during the first half of the year.

Symantec noted phishing toolkits as a major contributor to the growing problem of Internet security attacks in 2007.

Another increasing trend seen this year was attackers who now prefer to just lie and wait for victims to come to them by exploiting trusted Web sites.

Attackers no longer actively seek out their intended victims; they are more concerned with exploiting trusted sites. When a user visits a trusted site, the attacker may have done away with the victim's computer.

Joining the 2007 top 10 Internet trend list are bots and botnet, which continued to identify their way into covert computers and perpetrate a wide variety of malicious activity.

Bots hijacked botnets off the online map. The Storm Worm malware employed bot technology as well.

Web piling on vulnerabilities and exploits continued to grow in 2007 as IT staff members during 2007. IntrustX stands that comprised majority of plug-in vulnerabilities, posed various security threats that may compromise the availability, confidentiality, and integrity of a vulnerable computer.

Attackers found more ways to exploit vulnerabilities found in 2007 was Vulnerabilities for Sale—a system's vulnerabilities would be sold to the highest bidder.

Finally, Virtual Machine Security Implications made headlines in 2007 with major players going public even though the security implications of virtual technology have not yet been fully understood.

Security trends to watch in 2008

Symantec warns that the year 2008 will bring about threats that include diminution of misinformation, fraud, phishing, and malicious code.

Bots will continue to diversify and evolve in their behavior in 2008. Consumers can also expect to see things like phishing sites hosted by bot networks, among other forms of attack.

Symantec also expects that the number of new advanced web threats will increase as web services grow and businesses continue to converge on a uniform interpretation standard for accepting languages, such as JavaScript.

As the interest in mobile security is rising, attackers are also likely to take advantage of available vulnerabilities as phones become more complex, more interesting and more connected.

Symantec also expects to see spam evolving in order to evade traditional blocking systems and trick users into revealing messages.

Consumers can expect to see new types of attackers that contain malicious codes. Spammers will also continue to leverage breaking current events appealing to readers, capitalizing on highly visible current events.

Game enthusiasts are also at greater risk in 2008 as criminals, phishers, spammers, and others now direct attention to Virtual Worlds, while massive multiplayer online games (MMOGs) expand.

Global leader

Symantec is a global leader in infrastructure software, enabling businesses and consumers to have confidence in a connected world.

The company helps customers protect their infrastructure, information, and interactions by delivering software and services that address risks to security, availability, compliance and performance.

Based in Cupertino, California, Symantec has operations in more than 40 countries.

More information is available at www.symantec.com.

BCDA eyes development of 'second Global City'

Land ownership dispute seen as a stumbling block

By Roland N. Dantioga

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority (BCDA) is currently preparing to establish a "second Bonifacio Global City" as it awaited a court decision on the ownership of a 25.8-hectare property that would form part of the development.

BCDA vice president Aileen Dona said in an interview that the planned development would border the northern side of Subic Bay and Olongapo Village.

The project will, however, be less than half the original Global City, which covers an area of nearly 250 hectares.

"The new Global City would cover about 94.4 hectares, including the 25.3-ha Jeanny area and the 31.1-ha Asseny/BDA/Harrison breakwater area," Dona said.

"These are pieces of property we are ready for disposal but the BCDA is keen on waiting for the resolution of the ownership dispute between the agency and Rivent Inc (or Subic Offshore Village Association Inc.)—over the 25.8-ha property," she added.

Such consideration was made following a favorable decision of the Supreme Court in 2006, which recognized the BCDA's ownership of the Jeanny area that a group of Armed Forces and police officers—the Rivent group—claimed was owned by its members.

Asked whether a lengthy waiting time for the Supreme court decision on Rivent could compromise the option to create the second Global City Zone, said the BCDA was "not in a hurry" to dispose of the three pieces of property.

Still, the BCDA has not even taken possession of the Jeanny property and the agency has filed with the Pasig City Regional Trial Court an urgent motion for execution and motion for the issuance of a writ of possession of the SC ruling.

"We hope to secure the Jeanny titles within 2008," Dona said.

BCDA claims show that the Jeanny/Bhai property was valued at P80,000 a square meter and could earn at least P9.3 billion in up-front cash.

As for the Bhesit and Asseny/BWD/Harrison HQ, which are adjacent to each other, the land covered was valued at P60,000 per sq.m.

Since starting the conversion into productive civilian use of former military land and facilities across Luzon in the 1990s, the BCDA has posted P58.2 billion in earnings as of October 2007.

Of the amount, 80 percent or P30.26 billion came from Bonifacio; 12 percent or P4.7 billion from leases and joint ventures; 5 percent or P1.9 billion from secondary sale; and 3 percent or P1.24 billion from securities fees.

Saudi Prince's $153-M hotel project gets perks

THE BOARD OF INVESTMENTS has approved the green flag for a $153-million hotel complex project of Saudi Arabian's Prince Alwaleed, the world's 13th richest person according to Forbes.com.

According to BOI data, the project cost of about 97.65 billion pesos could earn for the country P1.75 billion in its hotel operation and the construction of the hotel, amounting to $108,362 per room.

EDI Manila Property Inc., a joint venture between Hualon's Gaisano Hotel Investments and Ayala Land Inc., will build the tourist facilities at the corner of Makati Avenue and Senate Road.

On that 7,337-square-meter property will rise a 300-room Marriott Hotel, 20-suite Raffles Hotel and 180 Raffles-branded serviced residences.

The luxury hotel complex is aimed at businessmen executives who need five-star accommodations as well as those staying for longer than two weeks and in need of serviced apartments.

The apartments would also cater to businessmen and executives who are on assignment to the country for a month to a year, and to holidaymaker families and local tourists on holiday.

The BOI said the project was to be in line with the Mindanao Development Plan for Tourism and was qualified to fiscal and non-fiscal incentives under the Investments Priorities Plan.

"This project aims to break a new ground toward the introduction and broadening of (the service) apartment approach) in the country's tourist destinations in the Philippines," the agency said.

The project is expected to create jobs for 1,708 people in the construction stage and 1,139 in commercial operation, which will start in January 2011.

The BOI's announcement came after Alwaleed's visit to the country in August with a team of 40 executives to formalize the joint venture with ALI and explore other possible investments here.

According to Forbes.com's 2007 list of the world's billionaires, Prince Alwaleed, AL waleed—a nephew of King Abdullah—is worth $19.3 billion.

Last August, ALI president Jaime I. Ayala said the project marked the start of Ayala Center's makeover into a world-class business destination considering that Bonifacio and Fort Bonifacio represent two of the world's biggest luxury hotel brands.

NFA sees stable supply, prices of rice

By Amy R. Remo

THE NATIONAL FOOD AUthority ends this year assuring consumers of stable supply and prices of quality rice and farmers income for farmers despite its estimated loss of 9% 3 billion.

"The NFA is mandated to stabilize the prices of basic commodities during emergencies and must ensure that rice will be available at all times and at affordable price under whatever circumstances," said NFA administrator Jessup P. Navarro.

Navarro noted increases in this year's monthly rice distribution, allowing consumers preferences for government rice.

"As of mid-December, NFA had distributed 35.5 million 50-kilo bags, about four million bags higher than our target of 31.5 million bags," Navarro said.

Priced at P18.25 a kilo, the NFA rice is distributed through 3,709 Kadiwas in Gloria in Palengke stores, 7,308 Tindahan Natin rice outlets, 297 Tindahan sa Gloria rolling stores and 20,233 accredited rice retailers.

Navarro explained that the Tindahan Natin outlets were specifically established in depressed communities to sell NFA rice, along with other basic commodities, at affordable prices.

As of mid-December, consumer assistance at Tindahan Natin outlets had reached 3.8 million bags, worth some P3.1 billion.

Meanwhile, Navarro said the NFA had consistently been able to ensure food security and stability of rice supplies and prices in areas affected by calamities.

For this year, the agency issued a total of 119,645 bags of rice to various relief agencies and local governments to assist areas affected by strong typhoons Cleoling, Dodong, Glenda, Kabayan, Lando and Milen.

On top of ensuring rice supply and prices, the NFA extends its support to the government's nutrition campaign by distributing iron-fortified rice to pre-school and Grade 1 students.

This year, the NFA delivered 2.5 million bags of rice to 9,750 public elementary schools nationwide, benefiting 2.63 million school children.

For its stakeholders, Navarro said the NFA was able to provide farmers with higher profits, following the national government's directive to increase support price from P16 to P18 a kilo for clean and dry palay.

The increase took effect in October this year.

Individual farmers who sold their produce to the agency got an additional P0.25 a kilo in centers, while farmers' cooperatives were granted another P0.25 a kilo as Cooperative Development Incentive Fund.

On top of these incentives, the NFA is giving farmers and cooperatives an additional P0.50 for every kilo of palay sold to the agency, known as the La Niña incentive, starting last month until March next year.

FILIPINO rice farmers are assured by the NFA of better prices for their produce. The agency has increased its buying price to P18 per kilo from P16 for clean and dry palay. On top of this, farmers get more incentives from the NFA amounting to P0.25 each per kilo. The NFA, at this rate, has the mandate to ensure the stability of rice supply and prices, buys palay from farmers during harvest season to build its inventory and taps into the buffer to sell rice to the public during lean months.

E.Visayas palay output posts record growth

TACLOBAN CITY—EASTERN Visayas recorded the highest growth rate of 14.1 percent in palay production among the country's regions this year, the Department of Agriculture said.

"We even anticipated our achievement. We were able to exceed our own target," said Leo Cattiba, DA regional executive director. The agency had set a growth rate of 7.5 percent.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Statistics, palay production in the region during the dry season (November 2006 to April 2007) was 308,000 metric tons. During the wet season (May to October 2007), it reached 440,000 MT.

The total palay production was 14.1 percent higher than the 833,000 MT posted in 2006.

Antonio Fortin, DA regional technical director for Luzon, said good government work support, extension and infrastructure, contributed to the rise in production to favorable weather and LGU support for the rice program.

Agriculture officials here are optimistic that palay production will surpass their target.

Among the provinces in the region, Leyte accounted for the biggest share in production at 36 percent. Southern Leyte and Samar contributed 9 percent each, Biliran and Northern Samar, 8 percent each, and Eastern Samar, 5 percent.

Eastern Visayas is now 113-percent rice sufficient, said Ruffino Ayaso III, regional coordinator of the Grains-ang Masaganang Ani rice program.

The rates year, the target was 1 million MT, Ayaso said. Victor S. Zafra, Inquirer Visayas

Fuji Xerox expects 100% business growth in RP

By Rita T. Olchondra

FUJI XEROX PHILIPPINES, THE SECOND largest printer manufacturer in the Philippines, said it would more than double its 2006 sales by the time its 2007 fiscal year ends in March.

Hideo Henderson, managing director of Fuji Xerox Printers for Asia-Pacific, said the company sold only 1,000 printers when it entered the Philippine market in 2004. This, he said grew to 1,600 units in 2005 and 4,000 units in 2006.

The target for 2007 is 10,000 units.

Henderson also expressed optimism that the company's market share would increase by a few percentage points due to a wide range of products being introduced to the market.

"We used to focus just on the enterprise market, but now we are bringing high-end technology to the consumer market at competitive cost," Henderson said. "We are new in this segment and have much room to grow on the consumer side."

Fuji Xerox Printers currently has a 20 percent share of the printer market in the Philippines—the second to 30% 60 percent.

Henderson said the company would slowly close the gap in market share by offering more choices that fit the needs of customers.

Last October, Fuji Xerox Printers launched the DocuPrint C1110, a high quality color printer to a small package.

Marketing manager for Asia Pacific and China Vincent Sin said the printer was launched to meet the growing demand of households and small businesses for quality color printouts at an affordable price and easy-to-use package.

PNOC group projects ₱4-B profit in 2007

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL OIL CO. expects its consolidated net income to breach the P4-billion mark this year, with the bulk to come from its petroleum exploration arm.

PNOC president Antonio Cuñado said in a briefing that the government firm's group profit had already reached more than P3 billion as of end-September, an overcome of close to P2.2 billion.

Considering the bulk of the earnings during the first nine months was PNOC Exploration Corp., registering gross revenues of P4.9 billion and a net income of almost P1.5 billion.

PNOC itself posted gross revenues of only P643 million, but saw net income hit P1.2 billion due to cumulative forex translation.

Proceeds from the sale of PNOC's remaining 60 percent stake in PNOC Energy Development Corp. last month was also expected to boost PNOC's 2007 revenues, Cuñado said.

Of the P68.5 billion sale price, P13 billion went to PNOC, while the rest went to national government coffers.

Also expected to contribute to PNOC's projected P4-billion net income for the year are PNOC Development and Management Corp. (PDMC) and PNOC Shipping and Transport Corp. (PSTC), which registered a profit of P537 million and P14 million, respectively, in the first three quarters.

PDMC president and chief executive Wilfredo Recarros earlier said the company—which is PNOC's real estate arm—posts a profit of P420.7 million this year, a double increase from last year's P94.1 million.

The expected profit surge could be attributed to the company's aggressive collection efforts, drastic cost cutting and sale of assets.

PNOC alternative Fuels Corp., however, had yet to contribute to PNOC's consolidated bottom line.

In the January-September period, PNOC-AFC registered gross revenues of P21 million and a net loss of P56 million.

But for PNOC, in general, Cuñado said the end of the year.

"We'll definitely have a higher income this year than last," he said.

A deal maker with a hot hand opens his wallet

BUFFETT

WARREN E. BUFFETT IS IN HIS mood to spin.

At 77, Buffett, the country's most famous investor, is in the midst of his busiest season in almost a decade. And he is capping his ten with a flurry of deal-making.

On Friday, Buffett stunned Wall Street by announcing that he would more than doubled Berkshire Hathaway's investment in Burlington Northern Santa Fe Corp., the railroad company he has long admired. The $4-billion bet is part of ING Group, the Dutch financial giant.

Three days earlier, on Christmas, he agreed to buy a $4.5-billion stake in the industrial conglomerate owned by the Pritzker family and a few months before that, he vaulted into the junk bond market, buying $2.1 billion of debt issued by TXU Corp., the electric utility.

As the fortunes of big Wall Street firms sink, Berkshire Hathaway, the holding firm that Buffett runs out of Omaha, Neb. is on a tear. Its Class A shares have jumped 27 percent this year, their best showing since 1998, when they soared 52 percent. The Standard & Poor's 500 stock index, by comparison, has gained a mere 4.24 percent this year.

In a telephone interview on Friday, Buffett said the timing of his recent investments was a coincidence. Since the credit crisis erupted this summer, he has repeatedly tried to thwart speculation that he might dive to the rescue of an ailing bank or Wall Street firm.

"We had no competition at the start of the year to do anything," Buffett said. "In the latter half, there was no limit to what we could do."

Thousands of investors on and off Wall Street study what Buffett does. It's no wonder. Over the past four decades he has built Berkshire Hathaway into a $216 billion company with businesses ranging from insurance and consumer jets to ice cream and underwear. During that time, his company's book value has soared by more than 180,000 percent.

And the interest in the financial markets this year, Buffett quietly reinvested with his company's vast stock portfolio, which totaled $78 billion as of Sept. 30.

He has increased his stakes in two major banks, US Bancorp and Wells Fargo, and sunk new bets on Berkshire's two biggest railroads, the company's largest railroad, and Corbin, the biggest used-car dealership.

With about $47 billion in cash on hand, Berkshire still has plenty of money for acquisitions. New York Times News Service

Top RP illnesses, what needs to be done

RESPIRATORY ILLNESSES LEAD the list of 10 leading illnesses in the Philippines, according to the official 2005 Field Health Services and Information System report of the Department of Health.

Of these, Acute Lower Respiratory Tract Infection (ALRI) and pneumonia top the list with 690,366 reported cases. Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis came second with 616,041 reported cases and TB Respiratory came in sixth with 134,368 reported cases.

The report also lists six abovementioned under acute diarrhea, influenza, hypertension, TB respiratory, heart diseases, malaria, cholera and dengue fever as the top 10 illnesses affecting Filipinos.

While the research for 2006 figures is underway, the rise in the number of reported cases calls for serious action. Comparing the study done in 2004 with 2005, a consistency between the two years in terms of figures and illnesses is revealed. It is therefore safe to assume that while figures could either drop or rise, it is likely that the same diseases might top the list for 2006.

What can be done and who can help?

The best way to help curb the prevalence of such diseases is still for people to undergo regular medical check-ups.

In fact, the government has done its effort to educate people about these common illnesses. There is already a wealth of education materials about these bacterial diseases. But the persistence and increase in the number of cases should encourage continuous efforts not only from the government but also business enterprises. While the government continues to encourage visits to the local health centers, it seems that not all people are able to respond to the call in time. And when they do so, it is sometimes already too late.

The first cases who should take action are the individuals themselves who should take note of the preventive or cautionary measures against such diseases. They should first learn to make a simple self-assessment.

Self-assessment tips

Here are helpful ways to do so:

• In order to avoid respiratory health problems, they should assess their lifestyle. They should ask themselves questions like: Do they smoke? Do they eat healthy? Is the air in the place they live in healthy?

• Quitting smoking or gradually lessening the habit is one good way to reduce the risk of respiratory illnesses. Since it's almost impractical to leave a certain cyber of residence despite the prevalence of pollution, one can probably lessen trips of passing through heavily polluted areas. Growing trees has been known to lessen the effects of pollution since trees absorb carbon dioxide and give out oxygen.

• People should also be more meticulous about what they choose to eat and drink. Eating in season, only plant increases the risk of catching diseases.

• Incorporating less alcohol, eating healthy, cholesterol-free food and living a stress-free lifestyle should help prevent hypertension. People should be wary though that in some cases, hypertension/ pastness sometimes do not show any symptoms, which is why it is called the "silent killer". Keeping this in mind, they should be able to assess their lifestyle and go to the doctors regularly for advice.

• Keeping their surroundings clean contributes to health. Nearly all cases of dengue arise from stagnant water.

• "Better safe than sorry", although a cliché, is the motto of ACE Insurance Philippines' corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative that aims to increase awareness about healthy living. This CSR program is part of the company's fifth anniversary celebration to give back to the community the support it has received over the past six decades.

ACE Insurance Philippines has gone on several mall and MRT tours already since the past couple of months. In each tour, it has attempted to draw people's attention to diseases by accosting simple medical assistance booths in the malls. At the MRT stations, health tips pamphlets are distributed. The objectives is always the same: To help raise serious interest among Filipinos from all walks of life about their health. To do this, ACE Insurance engaged the pool of medical professionals to conduct check ups especially for the small guys. The scheme includes blood pressure check and a simple question and answer session with the attending physician.

If the doctors find cases for the patient to visit another doctor for a more thorough check up, they they have played a valuable role in helping some individuals to focus on their health.

SANOFI-AVENTIS DONATES TO CEBU'S 'LITTLE LAMBS'

In announcing the end of the global corporate citizenship campaign, Sanofi-Aventis, through its corporate communications group Alter Ideals, recently turned over cash and medicinal donations to the Little Lamb Center in Cebu City. Pictured here are Sanofi-Aventis Philippines Inc. Country Manager Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan (left) and Little Lambs Center Executive Director Sr. Lucille Lamb (center) as they receive the donations from Alter Ideals Vice President for Corporate Affairs Rina Rivera (right). The Little Lambs Center is home for physically and mentally handicapped children. It is the first and only government-owned facility in Cebu that caters to children with multiple disorders such as cerebral palsy, autism and Down syndrome. The Alter Ideals volunteer group of Sanofi-Aventis serves as the service arm for the company's commitment to corporate social responsibility projects. Sanofi-Aventis is a leading global pharmaceutical company with 6 divisions, 16 sites and 2,000 researchers, who develop new drugs, develops and distributes therapeutic solutions to improve the lives of people. Shown in this August 2007 file photo (from right) receiving a check donation from Rina Rivera are sisters Irene Jelly Jalbuena Rosario, Rina Rivera's mom Isadora Del Mar, Michael Rivera, Sanofi-Aventis Corporate Affairs Director Ana Lorenzo, Sanofi-Aventis Medical Director Lee Tita, Matthieu Jolivot-Mrs. Rivera, and Sanofi-Aventis communications manager Cheryl Ann Serrano.

Godiva opens Robinsons Midtown branch

BEAUTY AND WELLNESS CENTER DOSE by Skin Station recently unveiled its latest addition to its fast-growing chain of Skin Stations with the opening of its new branch at Robinsons Place Manila, the new Godiva Skin Station is now the sixth branch.

"The opening of this new branch certainly marks yet another milestone for us", said Fred Reyes, president and owner of Godiva Inc. "Godiva is certainly expanding or business. With upcoming branches and new product lines coming in the pipeline, our customers can be assured that we will continue to provide them with only the best products and services in our chain skin care needs", added Reyes.

Offering a wide range of facial and body treatments, the new Godiva Skin Station in Robinsons Midtown welcomes luxury customers with the facilities and state-of-the-art range of skin care services. With its convenient and comfortable setting, coupled with excellent customer service, one is sure to enjoy an utmost skin pampering experience.

Godiva Skin Station offers skin whitening, rejuvenating, anti-blemish and firming treatments done by professional therapists. Medical consultants are also available for free consultation.

Other Godiva Skin Station branches include SM Fairview, Makati ReLaks, Alabang, Rockwell, Greenhills and soon to open in Quezon Avenue and Timog Avenue.

For more information, call 751-4040 (Makati ReLaks), 930-1103 (SM Fairview), 845-9484 (Alabang), 244-8714 (Eastwood), 722-9523 (Greenhills), and 367-1968 (Robinsons Midtown), or e-mail skinstation@e-godiva.com.

KELLY GRAVIOTO actress and Godiva makeover Don Cher Gutierrez signs autographs for her fans during the grand opening of the new Godiva Skin Station branch in Robinsons Midtown Nov. 27.

Petron 'Xtend Biyaheng Bigtime' offers Toyota Avanza grand prize

TWO BRAND-NEW TOYOTA AVANZA cars with P50,000 cash each are set to make for the grand raffle draw of the Petron "Xtend Biyaheng Bigtime" promo, which is ongoing until Feb. 15.

Every single receipt purchase worth P300 of Petron Xtend entitles the buyer to one raffle coupon, which may be dropped at selected Petron Xtend stations nationwide. Four monthly raffle draws will be held to choose the winners for the following prizes: two Nokia 6120 cell phones, 10 Jollibee gift certificates worth P5,000 each, and three Petron Xtend fuel vouchers worth P1,000 each.

To make during the grand raffle draw are five Magic Sing stereo phones, five Petron Xtend fuel vouchers worth P10,000 each, and two brand-new Toyota Avanza units with GPS conversion kit.

The deadlines for submission of raffle coupons for the 3rd and 4th grand draws are on 15 December (for 3rd draw) and Feb 15 for the 4th 5th 6th and grand draw.

Winners will be notified via registered mail, and should claim their prizes within 30 days. Petron Xtend is available at the following stations nationwide: Quezon City: Aristeo Cruz, Commonwealth Ave., Fairview; Commonwealth Ave. cor. G. Araneta Avenue, Batasang San Mateo; Payatas; Payatas City; Bistekal City; Gil Puyat Avenue; Buendia; Buendia cor. Ayala Avenue; Buendia cor. Gil Puyat Avenue; Buendia Station; Commonwealth Ave. cor. Mindanao Ave.; Project 6; Tomas Morato; Tomas Morato cor. Scout Rallos; Kamuning; Kamuning cor. Kalayaan Ave.; Kamuning cor. Kamias Road; Kamias; Kamias cor. Tomas Morato Ave.; Visayas Ave.; Visayas Ave. cor. Congressional Ave.; Visayas Ave. cor. Mindanao Ave.; Visayas Ave. cor. Tandang Sora; Tandang Sora; Tandang Sora cor. Mindanao Ave.; Tandang Sora cor. Commonwealth Ave.; Tandang Sora cor. Quirino Highway; Tandang Sora cor. Regalado Ave.; Regalado; Regalado cor. Fairview; Regalado cor. Commonwealth Ave.; Regalado cor. Mindanao Ave.; Regalado cor. Quirino Highway; Regalado cor. Greenhills Ave.; Greenhills; Greenhills cor. Ortigas Ave.; Greenhills cor. Wilson; Greenhills cor. Annapolis; Greenhills cor. Connecticut; Greenhills cor. Missouri; Greenhills cor. Pinaglabanan; Greenhills cor. Tomas Morato; Greenhills cor. Scout Rallos; Greenhills cor. Timog Ave.; Greenhills cor. Roosevelt Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Roosevelt Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Timog Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Scout Rallos; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Tomas Morato; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Visayas Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Mindanao Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Tandang Sora; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Quirino Highway; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Regalado Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Greenhills Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Ortigas Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Wilson; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Annapolis; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Connecticut; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Missouri; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Pinaglabanan; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Tomas Morato; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Scout Rallos; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Timog Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Roosevelt Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave. cor. Quezon Ave.; Greenhills cor. Quezon Ave.

People, Events & Products

E-mail us at ...
Edna Arias Espinosa

Petron celebrates Christmas with 6,000 children

CELEBRATING THE SEASON OF hope, industry leader Petron Corp recently held its annual gift-giving event Project Joy with 6,000 children. Now on its 16th year, Project Joy has become a tradition for Petron and its business partners to share the fun and excitement of the season, especially with children from underserved communities in Metro Manila.

This year's Project Joy was attended by DSWD Secretary Esperanza Cabral, DSWD Undersecretary Macamalinda Pangilinan, Bgdrd SOS Director Dr. Trevista Bonaventura, GM Supernalla president Annie Garcia, Pefilia ex-Manager Director of World Vision Development Foundation and basketball icon Jun Magsayo, among others. The activity was held at the sprawling San Miguel by the Bay in Mall of Asia.

It reunited the 5,000 scholars of Petron's Tulong Aral program and 1,000 children from DSWD shelter homes and sons and daughters of jeepney drivers as its beneficiaries. More than 900 employee volunteers from Petron's different divisions served as elder brothers and sisters to the children and made sure they enjoyed a memorable treat during this half day event.

SOSC and more rendered by scholars of Petron's Tulong Aral

They were joined by DSWD social workers and officials, and members from the Tulong Aral partner schools. The public schools DepEd Singing Ambassadors also volunteered their time and talent to sing for the participants of the program.

Project Joy is part of Petron's long-term commitment to Pasi 10/90, or helping Filipino children and their youth finish elementary and high school. The source of this program is to bring underprivileged children to school, keep them there, keep them well, and make sure they learn.

Started in 2002, Tulong Aral has not only continuously increased the number of its beneficiaries, but has helped the students perform better in school. At the end of school year 2006-2007, Petron had 100 outstanding students of Tulong Aral, 64 of whom were from Luzon. Most important of all by the first batch of 1,000 Tulong Aral scholars is expected to graduate grade school in March 2008.

In addition to its educational assistance program, the company has been constructing Petron Schools all over the country to ensure that children have a venue for learning. To date, Petron has completed building 11 schools, mostly in Mindanao, where the need is greatest.

In his welcome remarks during Project Joy, Petron Corp chair and CEO Ricardo J. Romulo reaffirmed Petron's commitment to corporate social responsibility. "Christmas is the season of hope, the season of thanksgiving, and the season of sharing. Project Joy gets real and Tulong Aral happened because we worked together to ensure a better tomorrow for our children. So let us continue to work as one to give our children a future they so deserve."

Petron was joined by its partners namely SM, World Vision, McDonald's Charities, Sa Aklat Bukal Foundation, and 1970 TSI.

PETRON Chair and CEO Ricardo J. Romulo reads one of the Christmas cards made by one of the 6,000 schoolchildren joining the company's Project Joy

SUN LIFE FINANCIAL BAGS IABC QUILL ONCE MORE

For the second year in a row, Sun Life Financial Philippines nagged an IABC Philippines Quill this time for LIFE VALUE video presentation aptly dubbed "Luz Valdez." Sun Life's Bea Paz-Ang executive assistant to Sun Life's branch manager, the winner's circle. Lilli Hill, a official video garnered a merit award under Communication Skills Division category. Shown is Sun Life Financial senior vice president for marketing Russell Dean, flanked by marketing officer Melissa Chan-Lazo and creative and innovative communications manager Cleo Antoni Paz as they accept the Philippine Quill Award on behalf of Sun Life from IABC board of directors R. Jesus Sandig and Carmencita Arao.

BCDA awards O&M contract to Lopez-led group

THE BASES CONVERSION AND DEVELopment Authority (BCDA) has awarded the contract for the operation and maintenance (O&M) of the Subic-Clark Tarlac Expressway (SCTEx) to a joint venture group of three companies led by the Lopez group.

BCDA president and CEO Narciso L. Abaya said the joint venture group is composed of the Lopez-owned First Philippine Holdings Corp (FPHC), Tollways Management Corp (TMC), and Lopez partner Egis Road Operation.

The terms of contract for operation and maintenance will be for six months, renewable for another six months.

The services include continued requirements for the efficient operation of the toll road, such as toll road collection, traffic safety and security management, toll road maintenance, including greenery and landscaping, management services, and all necessary support services.

BCDA president and CEO Narciso L. Abaya signed the contract with Pine Philippine Holdings Corp president Alpha Bautista, Tollways Management Corp president Anthony Abalos, and Egis Road Operation operations manager Marc Ellerondo.

It will be recalled that in September 2007, BCDA invited four short-listed companies to submit proposals in connection with SCTEx's asset for an interim service provider to operate the SCTEx.

The bidders were FPHC-TMC-Egis joint venture, Metro Pacific Investments Corp (MPIC), Ahlcon Israel Investment Philippines) Inc., and Israeli firm Highway Management Joint Venture: URBI Desa Prolo Corp (UDPC) and Philippine National Construction Company.

Only the joint venture of FPHC, TMC and Egis Road submitted eligibility documents and financial proposals which were subsequently declared lingle Calculated Responsive (SRC).

Operations and maintenance is the final phase in the implementation of the SCTEx project.

The SCTEx, which is 93.77 km long, is composed of two segments: the NLEX-Subic-Clark segment (Package 1), and the 43.27-km Clark-Tarlac segment (Package 2).

Toward as the country's longest expressway, the SCTEx is expected for commercial operations in March 2008.

PETRON Chair and CEO Ricardo J. Romulo reads one of the Christmas cards made by one of the 6,000 schoolchildren joining the company's Project Joy

VILLALON NAMED MEDICAL ONCOLOGY PIONEER IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

Professor Antonio D. Villalon, one of the country's top medical oncologists, was recently named one of the Pioneers of Medical Oncology in Southeast Asia" during the 31st Southeast Asia Radiation Oncology Group (SEARO) Council's field in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in Manila. Villalon and his favorite wife, Mina shared the recognition with fellow professors Dr. Hidayanto Hakimuddin of Indonesia, Somthu Dangsuwan of Thailand, and Tan Wee Tat of Singapore. The three pioneers were recognized for pioneering the development and advancement of medical oncology in their respective countries. Villalon established the first medical oncology training program for medical oncologists that produced the first locally trained internist-Oncology nationwide. The

Philippines currently has over 120 medical oncologists. Shown during the recognition ceremonies were (from left) Hakimuddin, Thongsuwan, Dr. Kathryn Bishop, MOH representative of the Ministry of Health of Indonesia, Villalon, and Tan Wee Tat (Singapore).

Forum on Parkinson's disease and the elderly

THE PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF the Philippine POSIT Foundation will be holding a morning on Jan. 6 at 11:30 p.m. at the 34th floor auditorium of the Orchard Heights Building Complex (OHBC) in Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. The morning is free and open to the public, and is being sponsored by Servier Philippines and St. Luke's.

PSGP is a registered non-profit organization that was founded in 1999, and aims to provide support to families and patients with Parkinson's disease, parkinsonism, tremor, dystonia, and other movement disorders. Its founding chair was the late former Vice President Emmanuel Pelaez.

For the current meeting, the speakers will be one of the country's top orthopedic surgeons, Dr. Cesar Dimayuga. Trained in the United States, Dimayuga will be discussing common orthopedic issues that plague the elderly and patients with Parkinson's disease or parkinsonism, including osteoporosis, arthritis, fractures from falls and fissure disorders. The lecture will be followed by an open forum.

For more information, call PSGP at 631-1321 or the Movement Disorders Center of St. Luke's at 727-1552.

Philippine tourism efforts lauded in China

THE COUNTRY IS MAKING HEADWAY IN coming the interest of the Chinese travel market, with the Philippine pavilion being recognized to the recent China International Travel Mart (CITM) held in Kunming, China.

Applauded for having the "best participation", the Department of Tourism and the private sector's outstanding promotional efforts included an inviting and colorful booth design, comprehensive marketing materials, the synergy and enthusiasm of the government and private travel sectors, the highly applauded performances of the Bagobohan Musical Folk Dance Company, and samplings of local beverages.

"The quality of the attendance we received at the fair speaks much of the excitement of the Chinese travel market over our destination and its attractions. We envisage a surge of arrivals from this part of China as a result of the successful endeavor," said Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano.

China is currently the fourth leading source of tourists and one of the fastest growing markets. A total of 327,054 Chinese entered the Philippines January to October 2007, reflecting a 15.6 percent growth rate over the same period last year.

The tourism chief is confident that the country's participation in the CITM will help are a strong momentum for increasing arrivals in the coming year.

The CITM is one of the major travel trade events in one of our top source countries. The annual reflects the high level of collaboration between the public and the private sectors. It serves to further encourage our industry stakeholders, who put their best foot forward in occasions such as this," Durano added.

CITM is one of the largest travel events in Asia, staged alternately between the cities of Kunming and Shanghai. Over 2,000 exhibitors from 92 countries and regions participated in this year's exhibit held in the sprawling 50,000-sqm Kunming International Convention Center.

The four-day affair drew in an estimated 70,000 travel marketers, industry professionals, media and potential tourists from the provinces and nearby areas.

The 2007 marketing tour for China set up the Philippines' 90-sqm booth that featured the tropical beaches, expansive golf courses and colorful fiestas around the islands. Brochures and other materials were also given out to visitors.

Leading the country's delegation was DOT Undersecretary for Planning and Promotion Eduardo Jaeger Jr. He was accompanied by DOT Manila-China Marketing Head Arlene Magtoto and team members Marian Dingco, Consultant for public sector operations, and OIC Shanghai-based Tourism Attache Grey Parga and DOT Marketing Representative for Guangzhou Marvin Pan.

The department's private sector partners and their counterparts conducted a series of business exchanges, forging tour operators Global Cebu Travel & Tours, Glenview Travel & Tours, G. Philippines International Travel and Emperor Travel & Tours met with China-based travel agents for possible joint marketing activities.

Top local budget airline Cebu Pacific Air and China charter consortium Xiamen Company were also present to discuss transportation services between the Philippines and Xiamen.

Representatives of the Philippine Retirement Agency put forth the country as an ideal destination for retiring citizens as it showcased various health and wellness attractions.

The table-top transactions were complemented with ample servings of mango juice and coffee from well-known Filipino brewer Figaro. Samplings of these beverages were also handed out to pavilion guests to give them a refreshing taste of the islands.

The Tinipuntikan Philippine National Folk Dance Company regaled guests with song and dance numbers showcasing the country's diverse and colorful culture. The 12-member troupe drew in a huge crowd during their performances on both the main exhibit stage and the booth.

The activities were an instant hit with the visitors. Cameras were clicking away during the Bayanihan dance. Long lines formed in front of the refreshments kiosk. Transactions and agreements were closed. This could only say one or promoting the country helped a drum up interest from potential tourists. More importantly, our private sector partners were pleased with the quality of discussions they had with their Chinese counterparts," Jaeger summed.

ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS' PRESS SCREENING

The phenomenal singing trio of Alvin, Theodore and Simon banks the opening of 2008 in the form of a press screening of the 110-foot-wide Alvin and the Chipmunks tall on Jan. 3 at the Glorietta 4 cinemas. Here are the Chipmunks with this exciting story of how Dave first meets the singing animals and how, after initial reluctance, he becomes their manager. Alvin and the Chipmunks is an entirely computer-generated effects, CGI (with live action and a strong, highly relevant story. Alvin and the Chipmunks opens Jan. 16 in the cinemas nationwide from 20th Century Fox to be distributed by Warner Bros.

BUSINESS Monday

E-mail: business@inquirer.com.ph
Business Section Editor
Marge Quispo-Lopez

Executives' hopes for business in 2008

By Margie Q. Lopez
and Tina A. Dandan

We ask movers in the economic sector their projections for the year to come

JOSE E. B Antonio, Century Properties

DOMINGO Y. Tuason, Ronlan's Supermarkets Inc.

CECILIO Pedro, Lumaljoro Corp.

Exporting to the Asian

"WE GREW MORE THAN 20 percent in 2007 and we are gearing for the export to Asean and the Middle East where there are many similarities and opportunities yet to be tapped."

Cecilio Pedro
Lumaljoro Corp. (*makers of Major toothpaste*)

Bullish about real estate

Shang Properties expected robust growth this year, one thing linked Tuason was sold one unit in St. Francis Shangri-la Place residential development to 70 percent sold. Development plan lease rentals and for sales for both, the Shangri-La Plaza Mall and The Enterprise Center extended budget.

Revenues [this year] grew by close to 60 percent compared to 2006.

In June of this year, Edsa Properties Holdings Inc., the property development arm of the Rizal Group in the Philippines, and Rank Philippine Properties Inc., which owns a handful of prime properties all over the country, merged to form Shang Properties. The merged entity endeavors to be a key player in the high-end real estate market. Toward the end of this year, we signed a purchase agreement that will enable us to acquire majority control of the Enterprise Center. We also acquired another prime property in the Bonifacio Global City.

We are bullish about the Philippine real estate market in 2008 and expect that Shang Properties will continue to grow. We have several new projects in the pipeline and our announcements will be made in due course.

Andrew D. Bonifacio
CEO, Rank Group Philippines

Realtor sales potential

Focused on pioneering Filipino's. Blueprint stores saved to be updated and make the existing stores more competitive by keeping up service and range of products expanded. Consumers demand was better than 2006 although the Christmas season was late. People are smarter—they hold on to their money to get better deals. Consumers spending is up by 7-8 percent. We also dreamed the gift baskets this season is high. Health and beauty products are flying off the shelves.

People are buying quality products with reasonable price tags. This eats across all income groups.

Next year we will focus on the full sales potential under the new management. [the blueprint group under the Ronlan Supermarkets Inc. took over the management of Ronlan's supermarket and fresh outlets last year.] "We are not yet operating in our full sales potential.

Bienvenido Jimenez III
President, Ronlan's Supermarkets Inc.

Great 2008

2007 was good, we're looking at a great 2008. The market psychology is positive and the macro fundamentals are good. We hope interest rates stay at current levels. We're looking at launching four projects in 2008.

Jose E. B. Antonio
Chair, Century Properties

Cautious about real estate

We had a fabulous 2007. Both property and hotel sales were very good. We are cautious on property [2008] because of subprime woes in the US, and the glut in hotel condo capacity.

Lotto sales will remain strong and maintain a 15 to 20 percent growth rate.

Willy Ong
Vice chair, Belle Resources Corp.

Chair, Pacific Online Systems Corp.

Int'l security threats for US businesses

WASHINGTON—U.S. BUSINESSES faced rising threats in 2007—including cyber attacks in Europe, theft of intellectual property in Asia, increased obstacles in Latin America, terrorism in many continents—according to a yearend analysis by the US State Department's Overseas Security Advisory Council.

In Europe, two weeks of attacks by computer interlopers that crippled government and corporate websites beginning in late April raised a new worry that US companies are could be vulnerable to retaliation by computer.

"It's entirely conceivable that those attacks can easily be replicated against a new target, including the US private sector," warned the council, which was established in 1985 to promote security in cooperation between the State Department and American businesses. The report was released on Thursday.

Among 10 security issues cited in the report, the council also warned of rising homegrown political radicalism and international challenges.

Intellectual property theft, screwlosses, natural disasters and political instability were listed as the most serious security challenges in Asia.

The threat from fraud and theft of trade secrets has been rising exponentially, the report said. It cited China and India as countries of greatest concern and warned that much of the damage comes from within companies.

"Once advises that US companies and other entities should take strong precautions against the insider threat, to safeguard communications systems, and to alert the relevant legal authorities of such threats," the report said.

Continuing political instability in Lebanon and travel advisories in Algeria were cited as the most alarming trends in the Middle East and North Africa.

In other parts of Africa, the report raised concerns about rising crime rates in many cities and a dramatic increase in kidnappings in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria that target workers of Western-owned oil companies.

Earthquakes and storms plagued US business in Latin America in 2007, but the report also cited integration from governments, including those of Venezuela and Bolivia.

"Political conflict has emerged as a concern in the US private sector in a few Latin American countries where leaders have nationalized private industry and campaigned against US interests through proposed constitutional referenda," the report said.

The council's executive director, Todd Brown, urged US companies to take heed of the developing threats and learn to protect themselves.

"Those US entities that take proactive security postures, manage their risks and develop an internal culture of resiliency often are better able to survive and even thrive in times of environment or in the aftermath of disaster," he said. AP

China falls for Christmas stores

BEIJING—CHINA'S INCIPIENT MALL IN late December leave little doubt that the country has been smitten by Christmas, if not to quite the way devout Christians might hope.

Customers but treated a spot on the Chinese calendar as a cherished excuse to buy buy buy. And while Communists is indeed spending in the officially atheist country, more than a few of the brief rites of the holiday's religious connection.

But that's none of celebration's care to rain the blessing of at least one group: economists.

"It's not really a real holiday," said Benny Zhang, 20, a computer programmer outside a Beijing mall with his girlfriend. "It's just an excuse for shopping and a chance to swap gifts with each other." Economists long despaired that the Chinese propensity to save, not spend, was wrong up trouble should China's exports falter, and having the world economy become it was not having enough from abroad.

Even as China has become wealthier, the no-logo culture has been reinforced by the dismantling of the social security system, which forced ordinary people to keep enough money on hand for education, medicine and old age.

But Christmas shows that Chinese consumers, buoyed by investing incomes have now burst on the scene with a boost to the appetite for consumer might read their American counterparts.

"It is hard to get away from cultural norms," said Sean Riddle, head of research in Beijing for Asian Long Riddle, a real-estate management firm.

"What is also true is there is a new generation that is starting young and really changing things. They value quality and they want to spend money," she said.

CHINA'S shopping malls have little doubt that the country has been smitten by Christmas, if not to quite the way devout Christians might hope. AFP/FILE

Seven of the world's 10 biggest shopping malls will be in China by 2015, Riddle said.

Hard numbers show why. Retail sales rose 16.8 percent in December from a year earlier, marking the fastest growth since 1999, the National Bureau of Statistics reported this month.

It's Christmas, sort of

Bedecked in trees and hanging, with carols played through their speakers, Chinese malls are thronged by shoppers at Christmas and look much like sure anywhere else in the world.

The difference lies just below the surface.

Peking Lian Income but limits China's list and is not are supposed to have nationwide selling license full sales potential.

Many of the malls' biggest tenants are state-owned to P400 and compare to P180. Not cheap but fair.

On the other hand, I had to pay P200 for the drug test and P100 for medical eye test and weight.

This means that for unspecified reasons, all drivers' eyes and unsolicited tests, mean workers' revenues are 1,944 times LTO's revenue.

For professional drivers, the private commercial revenues are 67.5 percent of LTO's.

From January to October 2007, the LTO license renewals and issues were as follows:

- Professional
Renewed - 1,206,610
New - 203,922
- Non-Professional
Renewed - 471,577
New - 261,633
Total for 10 months - 2,197,975

Assuming that each month's rates are the same as in March,

Jong says revenues would be P849,393,750 (2,197,975 x 200)

and medical fees and revenues would be P 218,797,500 (2,197,975 x 100).

A friend of mine that sees in the drug test business says the cabin drug test has cost P80 each. She tells P450 per test was his.

I bet that taxes competitive bidding could significantly reduce this cost.

I think that the eye testing should use more professional equipment so at least workers their eyes against that is professional eye doctors.

I therefore give LTO a "C" for governance. But LTO deserves exaggerations for its excellent business process reengineering of the license renewal process.

For a broader perspective of process improvement in government, refer to Ten Dollar's Dept. 24, 2007 article.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is president of Systems Solutions Consultants Inc. Feedback at magno@globeat.com.ph)

MAPping THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Adeva, Jr.

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Bana-Formoso Subeditor Lira B. Zuluaga

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Sculptural showcase of Mindanao culture

Rublni Ponce Millan's sculptural odyssey across Mindanao is a virtual tapestry of form and tradition, brave and proud, monumental in size, scope and vision

By Jehrondhar Libarios Rendoza
Contributor

MANY DAVAWENYOS consider Davao City's newly opened People's Park a very timely holiday gift. The P71-million, four-hectare facility includes a mini-rainforest, series of dancing fountains, automated waterfall, wheeling bicycle trails and jogging paths, picnic groves, multipurpose dance-domed hall.

Since its formal opening on Dec. 15, residents and tourists alike have come here in droves, basking in the warm sunshine, contributing to an atmosphere of graciousness and unagalingan's holiday spirit.

Entrance to the park is free but, as Mayor Rodrigo Duterte is quick to point out, not without a few restrictions. Vendors are not allowed inside the park and only Filipino music will be aired through its high-tech sound system.

Public displays of affection, at least those of the illicit kind, are strictly banned from the premises and monitored via strategically positioned CCTV surveillance cameras.

'Lumad' images

Near the park is a showcase of Mindanawon culture to celebrate in the many sculptures of Lumad children in colorful traditional garb found throughout the recreational facility.

These sculptures by artist Rublni Ponce Millan are a testament to Mindanao's glorious heritage and a statement of undelivered optimism for its future.

Millan's cool-faced, wide-eyed cuchos evoke the calm and genteel demeanor that characterizes the Dabawenyos. In this open and inviting landscape, people and sculptures come together, grateful in beautiful harmony, joyful and united in shared art, tradition and experience.

Children prominently figure in Millan's more recent works, an obvious effect of his husband-to-be Candaco born artist.

"We really have to start thinking about the kind of world we are creating for our children," he said.

To make sure his message does not fall on deaf ears, Millan has literally taken to the streets by transforming public spaces into broad canvases that depict indigenous pride, peace, ecumenical spirituality and ecological harmony.

MAIN STORY, C2

"LUMAD Children" II

"GTBS at the Fair"

Top Luz series on display

NATIONAL Artist Arturo Luz's feminine nudes in "Four Pieces," "Unicord the Soul" and "Performers" are on show until today in Galerie Raphael.

Included in the show are several major pieces such as Luz's "Grace of the Soul" and 1993's "Swordsoul."

Also in the show are two acrylic on canvas works—"Three Performers" and "Two Musicians and a Juggler."

Galerie Raphael is at Unit 2C-06, 2/F, The Piazza, Seventeen Mall, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. Call 8565851 or visit www.galerieraphael.com.

"THREE Performers"

"HAGAPAKIT Pair"

Images of longing and dread

UNVEILING ANEW BEFORE THE YEAR ends an exhibit that explores the human condition through cautionary tales and stark images "Living Images, Loaded Lives," at the Ali Centre, SM Megamall, Jan. 5-20.

Aaviel's paintings almost always leave you with conflicting emotions of longing and dread, the ambiguity of loss and desire, notes a fellow artist.

The images seem to activate dormant memories and emotions irrational, mysterious childhood anxieties—letting viewers in on sensitive situations and captivating them with her keen attention to detail and arresting moods.

Viewers are also prepared to see the trend of variety and terror, as if leading them from one highlight to another.

Where does Javier get all these inspiration for her works? Is it from her experiences as a nurse that gave her first-hand accounts of daily human drama to the confines of the ivory tower room? Or did pop culture lend a hand to motivate her to go for more disturb to eliminate?

The diptych "Morning Doesn't Always Mean Sunshine" dwells on old age at work. One is a headless figure of an elderly woman; the other is that of a young girl on a swing—both images reflecting how the passage of time has affected them, physically and emotionally.

"LAST Thing I Want to See"

"Life Ends at Second Childhood" features an ancient figure struggling before a lush moss sink. Supported by an aluminum walker, the viewer senses both helplessness and hopelessness. The angle of focus gives the viewer a child's perspective, imbued with brooding apprehension, and a curious detachment of observing someone else's struggle.

"The Last Thing I Want to See" depicts a dewlike figure in a frail position on a mangy mattress, resembling a raft on expansive body of water. This is a forlorn image of world weariness, a mute affidt in a sea of serenity of being both acceptance and deliverance.

"MORNING Doesn't Always Mean Sunshine"

Sculptural showcase . . .

From page 61

Big body of work

The People's Park is but one step in Millan's sculptural odyssey across Mindanao where, at 33, he is a legend of sorts, with a body of work that surpasses those of other artists more senior in years.

Indeed, Millan's oeuvre is monumental not only for its size but also for its courage, sense of pride and artistic vision. With a frenetic energy enabled by a quiet disposition, Millan is weaving a massive tapestry of forms and traditions throughout the island.

Today, Millan's gigantic sculptures punctuate the Philippines' southern landscape and are becoming tourist attractions that elicit awe and admiration.

Visitors arriving at the new Davao airport are welcomed by a giant denim manifestation in Soltan Kudarat (carved at a colossal scale). Elsewhere on Cotabato are strategically by forest cheetie. Pilgrims find solace at the Tagum Cathedral.

Elsewhere in Mindanao, Millan's creatures, drawn from such disparate inspirations as folklore, urban myth and current events, are conversation pieces that captivate, shock and provoke.

Also seen in the in Iloilo, the area where Dalubhasa meets Davao, is a 75-ft Buddha statue. In Millan's Buddha in Iloilo, Zen spirituality meets banal sensibility.

9/11 experience

But, like all great adventures, Millan's artistic journey is not without the requisite, life-altering descent to hell that prefigures redemption.

In the post-9/11 paranoia that shaped American foreign policy after the World Trade Center attacks in 2001, Millan was forced to cancel a scheduled exhibit in the United States when his visa application was denied.

"I was very angry," he recalled. "This is a free planet. Who were they to tell me where I can and cannot go?"

The artistic spirit in Millan fell bound, gagged, confined. It was only a matter of time before his fury would be unleashed to an explosion of creative expression.

Unconventional

Millan found refuge in Ponce Suites, a family-run hotel in Davao's Bajada district. There, the artist found a blank slate, begging to be classic upon. And so he drew, painted, installed, sculpted, often going without sleep for days.

The product was a one-of-a-kind hotel teeming with nuts crawling through ceilings, with walls scary are both interrupted with paintings, and where whipped cream spilled over to the staircase inner outside. It was, for some, a disturbance of the peace, but in this prolific journey through turbulence, Millan found transcendence.

It was also then that Millan discovered the power of three-dimensional forms.

"Sculptures naturally invite attention," he explained. "And big sculptures explore the imagination."

In this marriage of form and size, Millan found a potent tool, and a unique voice that is now leading the way in contemporary Mindanao art.

"LUMAD Children" 2

PEDI and bread sculptures grace Tagum Cathedral's entranceway

AN URBAN decker and a cut angel quilt area from Ponce Suites to the street. Right: Saban Kudarat's kingdom

A GIANT durian sculpture guards arriving at the new Davao airport.

UNCONVENTIONAL center: Ramon's Ponce Suites is teeming with giant pets.

People who come face to face with Millan often find it difficult to reconcile the artist's painful timidity with his larger-than-life works. A group of students who interviewed him for a school project were so surprised by his diminutive stature and angelic countenance they exclaimed, "Ay, ang liit pala n'Millan."

There is, of course, much more to the artist. Among the hallmark, it is a consistent belief that a human spirit dwells in his giant works long after death, continues to the Shaka-precious admonition that "the evil that men do dwells after them, the good often interred with their bones."

In his journey from rejection to redemption, Millan makes a bid for immortality one giant sculpture at a time.

Email the author at rodrendon@gmail.com.

Nativity eggs on exhibit

"NATIVITY Basic 4-Eggsibit" (left) and "Eggcology"

SALVADOR CHENG'S "EGGCOLOGY," A TRAVELING collection featuring eggs as a discourse on birth, is the featured exhibit of Ty'ni Gallery in Shops at Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig.

Although the show is timed for the Yuletide because of its theme of "NatiVITy," the series really alludes to the Western practice of using Easter eggs as symbols of the reborn Christ. For instance, "Emmet" is a mixed-media installation examining the process of gestation, birth and nurturing.

"Eggcology" runs until Jan. 12. Call 9513152.

"BUHAY"

VICENTE Manansala

Pinoy masters on exhibit

GALERIA FERNAN de Artes Finas Intramuros, Casa Manila, Madrigal Arcade, Makati) is holding the show "Masters, Filipino," featuring the works of Filipino masters Guillermo Tolentino and Victorio Manansala.

Also included are works by Oscar Estimerda, Jose Alboro and Cirilo Gabino.

The show runs until Dec. 29. Call 8888809 or 0928-2389515.

GUILLERMO Tolentino

Two painters'

From page D1

the duo tries to borrow from the French government.

But as this show demonstrates, he is still experimenting with the basic elements. At nearly a master artist, Cesio can still be playful with color and form. And that's what makes his art ever so strong.

Southern weave

Inclined to Cesio's distracted representation of fiber art are Leopoldo Aguilar's exquisite pieces in acrylic on canvas recently displayed in Artinformal, 2/F Glass Wing, Ayala Museum, Makati Ave. cor. De la Rosa St., Makati City.

At first glance, we could see this art falls on geometric abstraction, a lot of bull's-eye targets reminiscent of Kenneth Noland and Josef Albers in their homage to the circle and the square.

To describe his art making, Aguilar has coined a portmanteau term, simplicomel, to mean "both simple and complicated." Because though he employs the purest basic—the circle, the straight line—it actually transcends complex motifs and complicated aesthetic.

He says he has drawn inspiration from the Ilagan's design of the Maranao of Lanao del Sur. His composition has been derived from patterns of their brassware and ethnic weave, the malong.

These are patterns composed of series of straight lines (lupiq), circular designs (kotcotabong), and a range of geometric variations. From them, Aguilar has created richly hued forms that resemble color wheels, target marks, even a tree's annual rings.

Local sources

"Father & Son" consists of two clusters of concentric circles in various tones of browns, purple, gray and slate green against a plane of umber. With one cluster half-bigger than the other, the artist weirdly describes the composition as "basically a circle."

"Light Dust" consists of three such circles in various tones of brown, orange, red, slate blue, white, black and violet against slate gray. With the third cluster cut in two concentric placed right under the two other circular forms like circle to lollipops, the artist describes the composition as a "mandala within a standing figure."

The exhibition note reveals that, as a Fine Arts freshman at University of the Philippines Cebu College in search of directions, Aguilar sought out local artistic sources. "Local expressions continue to be a source of inspiration for him," it adds.

The simple forms also belies a complicated technique. Choosing tools he calls "applicators," he transformed plastic tubes filled with acrylic pigment and ripped them with an pin needles, then applied the pigment directly on the canvas, producing fine quick strokes and a textured surface.

"The distinctive linear marks," says the artist, "clearly respond to his concern for finding ways to paint other than using the conventional paintbrush."

The act of the young is ever ingenious, making room for deeper explorations and bigger discoveries. Aguilar is neither the discoverer of such tools nor the first explorer of such techniques, but such quest certainly makes art richer.

COSIO'S abstracted representations of Caribbean weave

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Two painters' take on fiber art

ALLAM Conie transforms seemingly random brushwork into a rigorous composition.

By Constantino C. Tejero

HERE IS ANOTHER CASE OF convergence of abstraction and figuration. Almost inevitably, the results do meet in the latest work of Allan Conie.

In the last few years, this artist had been researching evidence of his expressionist portraits and impressionistic landscapes. Recently he has taken as subject something minute and blown it up, that is, magnified the form to extreme close up till it has assumed an abstracted look.

We're talking of his exhibit of pieces in acrylic and latex paint on rubber, ongoing through December 10 in Gerry Roxas Foundation in Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

There are nearly 30 pieces of varying sizes that appear to be the typical quarreling of Abstract Impressionists. Seen up close, the pieces look no more than random brushwork, patch and splashes and clusters of innumerable dots of paint color, both brilliant and muted, strenuous and neutral. Seen at a distance, however, each piece slowly transforms into a rigorous composition of patterns.

In the late 1980s, Conie had worked with the weavers of Benguet and created one-of-a-kind wall hangings, some of which he exhibited along with pieces by American fiber artists and close by Austrian fiber artists in two shows at the Metropolitan Museum of Manila.

After almost two decades, Conie must have been so much fascinated with the intricacy of motif, fineness of execution and rich color sonority of the ethnic weave of our northern folk that he is still trying to replicate it even in painting.

Northern weave

These paintings are, of course, representations of the fiber art of the Philippine Cordillera. They may be taken as abstract but they're actually no more abstract than the very fabric—every line and thread, every hue and interval—of the textiles they represent. Each piece, in fact, displays the narrativeness, delicacy and bold coloration of that weave.

If these paintings look too decorative for one's taste, that's because they're exactly meant to be decorative, representing as they do ethnic tapestries and indigenous wall hangings. It's not unique Pinoy but rather impressionistic, and what the artist does not replicate with actual materials he duplicates in virtual form.

Active on the local art scene since the early '70s, Conie has worked in various mediums and represented in a range of styles and techniques. He received a grant from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation of New York; a cultural award from the city of Manila; and the rank of Chevalier de l'Or-

FOUNDATION/ C2

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LIFESTYLE

Music movers of 2007

Despite lack of support, the performing arts continue to thrive

YOUNG pianist Ormin Lesel Moreno

By Pablo A. Tariman
Core Beats

FOR 2007 triumphant team-up with pianist Cristina Ortiz, in a fresh rendering of the Grieg concerto, and her powerful Fifth Symphony by Tchaikovsky with the Manila Symphony Orchestra, my Conductor of the Year is Helen Quach, still a dynamo of the baton in her 60s.

For winning the choral Olympics twice—first in 1989 and this year—my Choir of the Year is the Philippine Madrigal Singers, under new conductor Mark Anthony Carpio.

For electrifying Metro Manila's guitar community and for reaching out to Manila guitar workers and students before and after his Manila recital, my Classical Guitarist of the Year is Uruguay-born Alvaro Pierri.

For enchanting both young and old in one concert, my Piano Team-up of the Year is the match of mid-teen team of Cecile Licad and Ormin Lesel Moreno, with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under Eugene Castillo.

For making Manila audiences fall in love with the violin many times over, and his stirring piano concertmaster as well in Baguio City, Iligan, and in Bacolod City, my Violinist of the Year is Antonino Abocado Fronda.

For bringing back the beauty of the baritone voice to Manila audiences and for that lucid mark scored at the Philacrille Theater with the University of Santo Tomas Singers, my choice for Baritone of the Year is Noel Ascona.

She is always the perfect choice to accompany both singers and instrumentalists and her latest team-up with Fronda and Ascona this past christmas bode well for us and audiences.

Therefore, my top shining Artist of the Year is Mary Anne Espina, who deserves her recent Alto Award many times over.

For managing up a total of 273 educational concerts annually and in some cities in Asia and United States, my Home Maestro of the Year go

FROM D1

Johnny Yu slates marimba concert

By Antonio C. Rita
Contributor

MARIMBA ARTIST JOHNNY Yu will give a concert on Jan. 13, 4:30 p.m., at the St. Stephen Auditorium of St. Stephen High School on Mauraglaw Street, Manila.

Joining him on stage are Dean Raul Damico of the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music; tenor Conrado "Jinalo" Dog III; and St. Stephen's Chorale conducted by Patricia Lyn.

"The program will consist of light classics as well as Philippine, American and Philippine works such as Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue," and standard classic pieces such as "Elegiacy" and "My Tribute."

Presented by the St. Stephen Alumni Association, of which Yu was previously a board member, the show is a fundraising concert.

Yu survived a stroke three years ago, and has gone back to playing the marimba, his instrument.

"Music is all for the glory of God, transcending all religions," he said.

A multitalent by profession, Yu is an accomplished marimba artist who made his debut recital at Carnegie Hall in New York City in 1983.

After finishing a business degree at De La Salle University-Manila, he went to Ithaca College and earned his marimba course with professor Ernesto Lindiaga Jose.

He trained with Walter Rosenberger, percussionist of New York Philharmonic Orchestra; professor Brindley Sherratt of the Manhattan School of Music; and José Bethancourt, Guatemala's foremost marimba teacher.

He was active on the concert stage before the strokes, and had premiered many foreign as well as Philippine compositions. He gave a command performance in honor of President Chiang Kai Shek on the occasion of the Taiwanese leader's 80th birthday. He has performed as well in the United States and Canada.

He has played with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra and given concert tours in Cebu, Bacolod, Iloilo, Davao, Zamboanga, Naga, Baguio, Dagupan and Iloilo. He is a recording artist for Legacy Music Word Corporation and Prism, Inc.

Surely heard on the concert stage, the marimba is a deep-toned Mexican cousin of the xylophone. Its keys are strips of hardwood or bone, cut to each a way that each bar has a different tone scale.

Under each strip is a resonator that is opened at the top but closed at the bottom by a thin bladder. It matches the tone of its key. The lower the tone, the longer the bar and the deeper the resonator.

The wooden keys are arranged like the keyboard of a piano but easy to play, ranging from large bass keys to small high keys.

Striking the keys with a pair of mallets produces tone. Two types of mallets are used for playing. Mallets made from hard rubber are used for brilliant, loud, percussive sound.

Mallets wound with yarn are used for mellow tones. The player uses two mallets for part passages and four mallets for chords.

Padang Hirig champion

The Pasig City Concert Choir composed of employees and residents of Pasig City is this year's champion in the adult category of the 12th Annual Padang Hirig, a contest for voice and choir.

Winning by a unanimous decision over 10 other finalists, the choir sang the required handiwan warm-up piece, Tzoumis de Guzman's "Bayan Ko," arranged by National Artist Lucio San Pedro for mixed choir, and Ramon Santos' "Tatlong Maliliit na Ibon ng Pasko."

Second and third places went to St. John Bosco Chorale, the defending champion, and Cosc de San Sebastian, respectively.

The board of judges were composed of Fr. Ad. C. Calalang of the UST Singers; Rodolfo "Boy" Cabarrubias of the DZXL-Manila Chorale; and Noel Antonio, baritone, choral conductor and UST Conservatory of Music faculty member.

A cultural note regarding the composers of the competition pieces: The late maestro San Pedro, who hails from Angono, took his primary education at Daraj Elementary School and secondary education at Rizal High School.

Ramos, on the other hand, is a hill-blooded Pasigueño.

Music, indeed, is a jewel of the city, and, thank goodness, the city government has actively supported the appreciation and dissemination of the musical arts through the holding of the yearly contest.

Exclusively a competition for the different choirs of the town then, it became nationwide in 2005, and has since grown in popularity.

The project was conceived by Soledad C. Eusebio, wife of former Mayor Vicente D'Estrubio (she herself would eventually become mayor), the son, incumbent Mayor Robert C. Eusebio, and the city council have continued the legacy.

PASIG City Concert Choir

BLUE-CHIP marimbist

Music movers of 2007

Frontpage A4

pianists Ingrid Sala Santamaria and Hayandelo Reyes.

For giving music competitions a new positive orientation and not making it a cutthroat, if not a resentful affair, for young musicians, the Music Contests of the Year are the National Music Competitions for Young Artists under program director Manuel Concepcion and the Piano Teachers Guild of the Competition Bach-Philomelo Competition under Fr. Manuel Alcantara, OSB.

For excellent programming and the attendant searchers from both artists and audiences, the Pianists of the Year are all. Pianists are Sergey Kasparov and Ilya Rashkovsky, who were recently heard at Philamlife Theater.

Opera treat

The opera year for January next year is Johann Strauss II's "Die Fledermaus," presented by the UST Conservatory of Music and Cultural Center of the Philippines.

It will feature the conservatory's opera treasures such as Rachelle Gonzalez, Andrew Fernando, Noel Antonio and other Thomasian performers, including extra.

The evening performances at 8 p.m. will be on Jan. 18-19 and 25-26; while 3 p.m. matinees will be on Jan. 19 and 26. Call 7214832.

Lizad comeback

Cecile Licad returns to the CCP March 28 with rare concertos: Beethoven No. 2 and Tchaikovsky's First.

The concert is presented by the Buencamino Foundation and CCP on the occasion of the 115th birth anniversary of Filipino composer Francisco Buencamino, great grandmother of Licad.

The concert will also mark Licad's 40th anniversary of her orchestra debut at age 7.

After her CCP engagement, Licad will do an outreach tour with the Pasadena group of Cedar Bridges and the Philippine Youth Symphonic Band first week of April.

Debut recital

US-based pianist Emily Rip Chua had her debut recital at the CCP Little Theater yesterday. Her concert, "An Afternoon of French Piano Music," featured selected works by Debussy, Chaminade and Chopin.

Chua is a graduate of Florida State University. She earned her Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees at the Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music.

CONDUCTOR Helen Quiachi (second from left) with audmakers during her Manila concert

Adeste Fidelis, a classical music treat

THIS YOUTH YULEtide season was marked by Adeste Fidelis 2007 at the Henry Hall of the Philippine International Convention Center.

The company of classical artists consisted of sopranos Rachelle Gonzalez, Raida Gamotan-ng, Elaine Lee and Jennifer Uy; tenors Melyn Calimbag, Michel Gaudan, Randy Gilango, Sherwin Inocan and George Ting.

Jonathan Chino Toledo conducted the Metro Manila Community Orchestra.

Also performing were the Philippine Madrigal Singers and Chiang Kai Shek College Youth Choir under conductorship from Tan Su-Ee.

The host was no other than Celeste Cabaling sang One Lord's Prayer in the procession.

The orchestra opened up with a robust overture of "Hark! The herald Angels Sing" which was especially arranged for Adeste Fidelis.

Among the selected music in the program were "Adeste Fidelis" ("O Come All Ye Faithful"); the solemn "Panis Angelicum" (Bread of Angels), the favorite Communion song during Catholic Mass; Schubert's "Ave Maria," "Angels from the Realms of Glory" "O Holy Night," "Silent Night," "What Child Is This?"

Particularly well-received was "Light of a Million Mornings," rendered solo by Gonzalez.

Pop singer Vina Morales sang the Filipino Christmas song-medley with tenors Cabaling, Ocson and Candino, who was flown in from his base in Mexico.

The full-company rendition of "Joy to the World," Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" and the encore, "Ang Pasko Ay Sumapit," roused the audience to its feet.

The concert was presented by the Management Association of the Philippines headed by its president, Albert del Rosario, former ambassador to the United States. Co-presenter was Credit Suisse AT BC.

The concert was produced by Eduardo H. Yap.

PRODUCER Eduardo H. Yap

SOPRANO Rachelle Gonzalez sings "Light of a Million Mornings."

Operatic New Year's Eve

HYATT HOTEL AND CASINO MANILA USHERS IN 2008 WITH the New Year's Eve performance from the Philippine Opera Company.

Hold on to your seat as the Three Waiters jump out and surprise the audience with their operatic performances.

Be awed by the dashing good looks of the Three Tenors, who effortlessly sing light classics, popular standards, Broadway songs and everything else in between.

Enjoy the lovely and youthful ladies of the Opera Belles, who is perform are the Swan Maidens and Ills from Sounds Good Music.

Floyd Quimco is musical director.
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LARA Magno of Opera Belles

JACK Salud, Joan Alberto Guerrero and Sherwin Sozon

FAME Faces of Opera Belles

JENNIFER Uy, Elbur Esquivel and Ana Goldenbloss

EMERALD Orthodontics (EO) vice president Cristy Aquino, Socorro Ramos of National Book Store, Metro Capital director David Ireland and EO president Myrlan Ballogo

Books-and-mags distributor marks 20th year

EMERALD HEADWAY ENTERprises Inc., a magazine and book distribution company celebrated recently its 20th anniversary at Hotel InterContinental.

The firm was founded by Rhenan Ballogo and Cristy Aquino. During the anniversary, the two owners gave special recognition to its top retailer-partners and loyal subscribers.

Emerald Headway started in 1987, with the Xtra magazine. It now provides the Filipino reader with over a thousand international magazine and book titles.

Today, Emerald Headway has grown into a full-fledged multinational company, having established a partnership with Metro Capital Limited, an international investment group based in Malaysia.

New book on Bulacan heritage

A NEW BOOK FEATURING the contributions of Bulacan to the arts has been recently released.

Bulacan has more than her share of national heroes, great composers and poets, artists and writers, and religious landmarks.

In this attractive, richly illustrated book, cultural author Agustin Six Contreras takes the readers on an armchair tour of the province and reviews Bulacan's prominent personalities in the arts. It focuses on the achievements, past and present, in architecture, visual arts, literature, music, dance, theater and crafts.

Produced by the Provincial Youth, Sports, Employment, Arts and Culture Office (Presidency of Bulacan, and criminal supervision, design and print production by Textual Mix, "Bulacaniana" is the next best thing to an actual educational tour of the province.

Available at Provincial Provincial Capitol, Malolos, Bulacan; cell: 0441.7934884, 9474928, 9517-4822894.

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Well-appreciated 'Nutcracker'

The Philippine Ballet Theater's recent production kept both youngsters and adults entertained to the hilt

By Elka Krystle B. Baquiano
Contributor

THE NUTCRACKER" HAS come a long way from the opulent sideshow ritzz it was when it first played at Russia's Mariinsky Theater in 1892, under famed choreographer Marius Petipa.

Based on versions by well-known French author Alexandre Dumas from a book by E.T.A. Hoffman, the story has since undergone several versions to become the comely popular Christmas staple that it is today.

But the plot, like Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky's delightful music, remains unmolested. Young German girl is given a toy nutcracker who turns her from giant size, then transforms into a prince as they journey to an enchanted land where their bravery is celebrated through a showcase of dances.

"The Nutcracker's" ability to "captivate both the young and young at heart" came true once again with Philippine Ballet Theater's recent production.

Using the Michael Glennon and Gelsey Kirkland adaptation for its show at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Ilona Theatre, the company's stellar cast kept both youngsters and adults entertained to the hilt.

In awe

The audience gaped in awe at the adept array of the dancers as battery characters. Especially lauded were Katherine Tarlac's expressive Sister Buddhaum, Faye Abigail Tan's passionate Sugar Plum Fairy, and Jared Jehoreli Tan's valiant Nutcracker Prince.

Tarlac, in a ruffled velour nightgown, looked as if she was barely in her teens. Employing light and nimble footwork, PBT's resident guest artist executed a round of fouettés and pirouettes that were soft but rife in our point, but her grand jeté near the finale were powerful and jaw-dropping.

Meanwhile, the company's principal dancer, Tan, was clearly the dominant of the dunes in movements as passionately expressive as her face. Her willful extravagant, clean (ballet) and long slant earned roses as well as her chatty who during one of the well-loved divertissements.

It was heart-warming to watch Tan's younger brother, Jared, portray the role of the prince who graciously supported Tan in lish dives and lifts, as well as in her finger pirouettes during the romantic pas de deux.

FAYE Tan and Jared Tan, with Marina Parry, below, Anatoly Pronyaikin as Drosselmeier and Katherine Tarlac as Marie

The younger Tan also drew in his quick but memorable solos, which were filled with exacting barrel turns and great leaps that occupied the entire stage.

Not to be ignored, too, was dancely Princess Pastry's Godfather Drosselmeier. The company's resident ballet master, who enlisted the holiday dance from corner to of his days with the Bolshoi, exuded an air of mystery as the man responsible for Marie's journey through the Kingdom of Sweets.

There were a number of other highly entertaining characters which enriched the pantry of the production. The magic would have been lost without the giant mice led by Marcus Martin's Mouse King and the Reeds with Mark Pineda's Pink Spy, the Green gods, which were all in resolutely old-fashioned costumes that added to the charm of the show.

The national dances Dona Spain, Arabia, Russia and China also alluded to holiday treats, with Hilda Aquino and Jon Pennigar's Chinese ribbon-and-fan dance-movement in another crowd favorite.

Imperfect

This "Nutcracker," though, is not perfect. The minimalist setting in some scenes merely an abstract profusion of lights) didn't live up to the traditional grandeur of the story. And the scholastically painting, which depicted some barren mountains where the animal dances came from, was low on young audiences who were looking for a more literal view of the fantasy place.

And the traps in ballet were clumsily blunt impressions on their faces and were sorely lacking in precision as the Snowflakes and the Flowers, in what were supposed to serve as climaxes to some of the production's dramatic sequences.

Nevertheless, the corps looked tall, poised and immaculate in their calf-length tutus with dropped shoulders and low necklines.

And the outstanding heroes at the end of the generally appreciated production were undoubtedly still well-deserved.

PBT opens its 22nd season next year with "Harlequin" on May 19-18, followed by "Dystopia in Avenger" on Sept. 26-28, and "La Fille Mal Gardée" on Nov. 28-30.

E-mail the author at ekbaquiano@gmail.com

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MIKE COROZA with spouse and well-wishers

COROZA with other SEA Write laureates

POET-TEACHER Coroza

SEA Write Award for Michael Coroza

By Gary Devilles
Contributor

POET-IN-FILIPINO MICHAEL Coroza is this year's Philippine recipient of the Southeast Asian Write Award, given out for regional writers by the Kingdom of Thailand.

During the awarding ceremony, Coroza serenaded the guests with a poem he made only for this evening. This year's awarding ceremony was held in the Oriental Hotel in Bangkok, with H.H. Prince Prem Purachatra gracing the event.

Coroza has received major awards from the Don Carlos Palanca Memorial Awards for Literature, Taiwan's Ginto or Ta-lo Gumtongsik Collateral, and Home Life Magazine National Poetry Contest.

His books, "DIO' Sibol" and "Mga Lagot na Liwanag" were featured in the National Book Award for Poetry.

Coroza has also widely performed the Pangasinan locally and in Singapore and Hawaii. He recently represented the Philippines in the 18th Kuala Lumpur International Poetry Reading.

As a staunch advocate of Filipinization, Coroza also hosts "Dinamu ng Pesa," a weekly radio show over DWLM that translates traditional and classic Filipino songs and poems. The show features the Mabuhay Singers.

Two years ago, De Battistini in Bilibid Filipino Incorporated spent Coroza a national award of recognition for his contribution in the development and promotion of the Filipino language and literature.

In interviews and lectures, Coroza bemoans the fact that the Filipino language is always seen as the subject for English language education of Filipinos and that somehow the promotion of Filipino in various media is a symptom of this problem.

Such narrow-sightedness for Coroza is the very opposite of our problems in education and not in language acquisition whether in Filipino or English.

Coroza further believes it is the duty of scholars to translate works from its original language (and not only the once translated already in English) to Filipino for a true revolutionary education of people to be realized.

Coroza is a member of the Filipinolohiya Department of Ateneo de Manila University. He lectures at the Graduate School of the University of Santo Tomas (UST). He finished AB Philosophy at the UST Faculty of Arts and Letters and was a writer-editor of the Varsitarian, the official student organ of UST, during his college days.

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

25 years of Café Ysabel

MY FAMILY WENT TO Café Ysabel the other week to celebrate its 25th anniversary. We had been invited to a special dinner prepared and served—treat by superchef Gene Gonzalez, his son Gino, and their students from the Center for Culinary Studies.

Twenty-five years ago, Café Ysabel started out as a former fruit store on lonely Wilson Street in suburban San Juan, the first restaurant to open in what has now become one of Manila's premier restaurant scenes.

We loved a short block away, practically the café's only neighbors, separated by empty fields of grass.

My family had just about moved into Café Ysabel, where we spent very often and were usually at ease, reminded until fed with our menu favorites and, often enough, surprised with new offerings distinctive for their newness.

Today's Café Ysabel is the renaissance in a pre-World War II house standing on a San Juan street, one of the few surviving examples of the old green-and-white San Juan-style Sobas (bahay-na-bato) remaining. Built when the hilly area was a weekend retreat for Manilenos escaping the heat of the city.

Latticed verandas wrapped around the two-story wooden houses that were designed to maximize the crisp San Juan air. Although Café Ysabel's second-story verandas have been glassed in and air-conditioned, the old San Juan feel is still there.

The menu, a journey recalling all of Gene's restaurants past and present, deserves to be published.

Notable menus

Lamp: Annie Gaelle, Mango and Squid Steamed in Almond Wafers

Tilefish & Clam Mole al Forno with Feta Cream, Mixed Greens, Candied Walnut, Pine Nuts, Cranberries, Crowns Moncai.

Café Ysabel Cheesecake

A TRADITIONAL Spanish-style "bahay-balangkas-na" building is Café Ysabel.

THE AMBIANCE is total—heritage ambiances, wall and ceiling frames, and great food.

Three Ways Chilly / Sorbet / Chocolate Wasabi.

Classic Roasted Seabass in Sauted Pesta, Bocon Whisked Butter, Blueberry Day Sauvignon Blanc 2005.

Café Ysabel Demitasse and four fresh Sorbet.

Dulce's Brûlée Roasted Hunger Steak with Sweet Breads and Ham, Stuffed Mushrooms, Truffle Demi, Potato Dauphinoise, Tarte Mes La Pleine 2002.

The Smiling Chef Strawberry Shortcake, Balsamic Ice Cream on Brandy Snaps, Ginger Caramel Sauce, Balsamic Glaze, Tarte Monsieur d'Dec.

Rose Petal Pralines
Coffee or Tea.

Neighborhood presence

Gene's menu surprised many of his own menus we enjoyed in the jean quarter of a century Café Ysabel has happily been our neighborhood haven. It still is.

Although we now live on the opposite side of town, within walking distance is many of the most fashionable restaurants of the moment, we still go back to Ysabel from time to time simply because body and soul feel so good to be there.

May 2008 find you always in places where your body and soul feel good.

E-mail the author at pride.pisco@gmail.com

Author answers issues on the 'Aranetas'

By Maria Lira Antonia Santiago
Contributor

DEAR FR. DIEGEL BENGIL,

Thank you very much for your book review ("The Aranetas in Philippine History," Lifestyle Inquirer, Dec. 10). I am really very pleased that people are reading my not-only-about-my-family writings as a book since my family lost the story of my family.

It is heartwarming to know that I have contributed to a better understanding of our country's history which is also what a young writer, Ed Maclo, wrote to his article in the Manila Standard, "Through the Eyes of an Aranetas."

He writes: "The more we read the book and the more pictures we see, the better understanding and appreciation for Filipinos we gain ..."

If you do not mind, I would like to disagree with you that I did not mention all the children of Gregorio, and that their husbands were not mentioned. Please take a look at p. 56.

I did a head count several times to make sure that 14 children were mentioned in Chapter 3 (briefly see p.67 nearby additional). I took another head count today to see if all the wives or husbands were mentioned and they were.

The wedding photos of everyone who got married are also included in the book. If you would also take a look at pages 101 and 102, you will find all the photos of all the children of Don Gregorio.

As the other set collection of our Tio Luis, the donation of the antiques of T. Luis is mentioned on 78. When the exhibit was first opened, it featured his antiques, not his paintings.

However, you are right in the family of Salvador. The four children born before she was were mentioned in "Life in Veronica," while Regina's birth was mentioned partition.

The partners of all the sons in law of Salvador are in the book except the husband of Regina. By that time, when they were in Mexicoville, there were no more family photos that had everyone together.

On the debate—I did not seem to read about the intervention of Father Ortiz in the Magsaysay blogsite. My written by Moreno, though it might have been an oversight. I just wrote it in Ding Ledesma to ask him to fill me in on this matter, as I always had the impression my father was a consistent advocate for industrialization.

Were there two big debates when my father was agriculture secretary? What I wrote about was the farmers Pres ret-ain the Rodriguez Plan. When Dad advocated the New Deal formula for Mindanao and the relocation of families there, that, indeed, was agricultural development but at the same time he called for the establishment of basic industries and giving incentives to private investors. (Briefly refer to pp 370 and 371).

As to his other pics, well, you are again right. We never asked Dad why he wanted a resolution. But for the right to keep the Blessed Sacrament, that I intend to explaining when I write about the Pious Union.

The chapel, the dates were all classified under the so called Pious Union. Priests are now not allowed to dance rock-and-roll and things like that.

I missed the reason for the Pious Union classification. He did mention many times that he would like however through his school.

There are many things I would have loved to ask my father and mother. Many times when writing this book, when I could not find what I wanted to write about, like the value students. I knew I had, I would

pray and ask them, Mom and Dad: What do you want me to write about. I would find new things which were lost to

ENTERTAINMENT
Editor Ernesto G. Velarde

Buboy blames 'detractors'

CEDAR "BUBOY" MONTANO HAS ONE thing to say to "those trying to destroy my family," and it's not nice. "May kaniyan-kaniyan dapat."

There was no way it could have escaped public notice that his wife Sara Abaya had recently—on Christmas Day,

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Gov't pledges more support for film industry

FDCP also calls on producers to take advantage of available funds

By Marinel R. Cruz

TURNING THE PHILIPPINES IN-to a hub for foreign film production in Asia is the major thrust of the Film Development Council of the Philippines in 2008, its chair Rolando "Archie" Arienza said.

"The easiest way to effectively export our services is to get the producers to come here," Arienza told Inquirer Entertainment.

B'wood, Singapore

Three of eight Hollywood film producers who recently visited the country have promised to make movies here next year. The producers came to check out the Philippines as an alternative site for Hollywood films.

"We are also hoping to develop joint ventures with Singapore," the FDCP chief said. "They have the technology, we have the creativity and the skills."

In November, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye represented the country in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between the Philippines and Singapore. The signing coincided with the Asia Film Market and Conference, also in Singapore.

Calling producers

Arienza said the council will be more "aggressive" in investing in films—as an antagonist—in 2008. He said only a few producers have come forward to make use of the P25-million Film Fund, which has been in existence since 2006.

Films co-produced by the FDCP are Eddie Romero's "Dance of Lust," Adolf Alix Jr.'s "Guwapi," Peque Reglang-ana Jr. and Dominic Veloso's "Isang Tinig" and Joey Reyes's "Boysen."

"We're hoping that more producers will use the fund. It's really for them. Plus, the fund has to revolve so we can help other filmmakers," said Arienza.

Festival subsidies

The FDCP will continue to grant subsidies to independent film producers who get invited to international film festivals, he added.

This year, an estimated P5 million were disbursed to finance the trips of films like Ineng Mendoza's "Foster Child" and "Tandoy" Jim Libiran's "B'laa," Lav Diaz's "Death of a Dynasty," Sherwin Belloso's "Pisay," Neil "Bahrec" Tan's "Kaal for Rent" and Alex "Kalbo" Lo's various films both within and outside the country.

Arienza also said the FDCP will continue supporting locally produced films like the ongoing 2007 Metro Manila Film Festival. "This year, the FDCP was asked for financial assistance," he said.

SHELBERT
Mayor of "B'laa."
FDCP helped finance Dan Villegas' Tagalog movie and Dutch Korean filmfest.

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GALLERIA

1 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO + THX
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 RESIKLO
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
7 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
9 BAHAY KUBO
10 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9

ERMITA

1 RESIKLO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
6 BAHAY KUBO
7 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
8 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
9 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
10 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO

METRO EAST

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 BAHAY KUBO
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
4 RESIKLO
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
6 KATAS ng SAUDI
7 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
8 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

NOVALICHES

1 RESIKLO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 BAHAY KUBO
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
7 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
8 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO

PIONEER

1 RESIKLO
2 BAHAY KUBO
3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 KATAS ng SAUDI

STA. ROSA

1 RESIKLO
2 BAHAY KUBO
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
4 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
5 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

LIPA

1 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
3 BAHAY KUBO
4 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
5 RESIKLO

DASMARIÑAS

1 RESIKLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
5 BAHAY KUBO

IMUS

1 RESIKLO
2 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 BAHAY KUBO
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

ANGELES

1 RESIKLO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

TARLAC

1 RESIKLO
2 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
3 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9

STARMILLS

1 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
2 BAHAY KUBO
3 KATAS ng SAUDI
4 SAKAL SAKALI SAKALO
5 RESIKLO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

BACOLOD

1 BAHAY KUBO
2 SAKAL SAKALI SAKALO
3 RESIKLO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4
5 KATAS ng SAUDI
6 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9

ILOILO

1 RESIKLO
2 SHAKE RATTLE and ROLL 9
3 BAHAY KUBO
4 KATAS ng SAUDI
5 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
6 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 BAHAY KUBO
2 SHAKE RATTLE & ROLL 9
3 SAKAL SAKALI SAKLOLO
4 ENTENG KABISOTE 4

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MMTA MOVIE GUIDE

METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

NOW SHOWING

Eagerly seeking Santas in show business

NOW THAT CHRISTMAS Day has come and gone, let's try to keep the spirit of the season alive and glowing by eagerly seeking other Santa Clauses in show business.

At first, the search for boss, producer and superstar appears to be a brilliantly transparent ploy. Santas are supposed to be selfish, self-obsessed self-pro

sources who are truly willing and able to do anything to get ahead in the biz, no matter how many obstacles they trample on along the way.

While clear cynical and negative industry traits in Santas out by the "hot" standard and conventional wisdom's real state of affairs isn't quite

Asking around in the biz, we're happy to be informed that, while some stars charge an arm and a leg for their services, when it comes to fundraising efforts, quite a number of luminaries are actually willing to waive their stellar fees completely, or accept relatively small, "pang-ani" honorariums.

Waiving fees

This is quite impressive, because stars receive much more than just me, so when they waive their usual fee, they're giving up thousands or even hundreds of thousands of pesos, just so they can help make a fundraising show a success.

Sad to say, however, some "charities" take advantage of stars' generosity by claiming to be for the benefit for the poor, elderly or children, when their true purposes, in fact, pocket most of the money raised.

Other celebrities complain that some charity have funds allotted for guest stars, but organizers sometimes tell stars that the shows are "pro-bono gigs... and pocket the fees that should have gone to the chosen guest entertainers.

As a result of these and other dishearteningly perverse, some otherwise generous stars have become extremely and understandably wary about their beneficiaries. Be careful, be, when they sense that a fundraising show is on the up-and-up, they're as supportive as ever.

Caring ear

Another area in show biz where stories abound is the "advice to the life lorn" syndrome. Stars are very competitive, but when some of them hear that a colleague is in any kind of trouble, they're usually too willing to lend a caring ear—and helping hand.

Some stars don't want their good works to be talked or written about, but they still get "found out" in the end, providing great inspiration to everyone.

For instance, the late Bernardo Bernardo, Jr. quietly helped a lot of people, but, sought neither fame nor recognition, aside from assuring movie-actress in need, he was also very supportive of new singers in showing new talents for the movie and TV.

Other show biz luminaries who make sure that promising newcomers are also quickly given work in the theater, the music scene and children's shows. They get very little or nothing at all for their pains, but the psychic satisfaction is great.

Some people believe that local entertainment is overrun by thousands of self-centered stars like Santa Claus' good-hearted elves and others are alive and well in the biz!

Buboy blames 'detractor

Front page 01

no less... packed a free lunch again and ran with her lunch bucket.

Buboy is not amused.

"This is one of Ghior's [illegible] worries to things... told heavens is an EMA. "[illegible] are not her exact message... poisoned her mind. She [illegible] acted and speculated wildly.

The home of [illegible] Brazilian teen model who said to frequent the [illegible] restaurant.

Buboy would have been [illegible] ing in the mouth when he [illegible] this. "First, I did not have a [illegible] night stand, and I do not [illegible] any extraordinary affair or [illegible] kind of thing with any [illegible] girl, especially being [illegible] are stupid. Aboged bang pa [illegible] paparot ang panguloo [illegible] ang going to write a letter [illegible] I love my wife and my [illegible] My children are precious to [illegible] think to ako ipagpapalit [illegible] ang ay sembaling kalapastangan [illegible] Perhaps my detractors [illegible] whichead my wife this [illegible] sending Chef total disrespect [illegible]

A while later, very likely [illegible] bitching, Buboy sent in [illegible] message:

"The handler of the [illegible] Brazilian model saw the [illegible] texts text to Buboyind, [illegible] warned me and [illegible] spread out. She said, "This [illegible] newbie to area, Coosa".

Anne Curtis

CHILD actors in "Kubo," a recipient of FDCP assistance this year.

Gov't agency . . .

Viewpage 41

plained."

The FDCP likewise assured this year's Cinemalaya Philippine Independent Film Festival and Cinemanila International Film Festival.

"Next year, we'll be a little more involved in the festivals

industry," Arienza said. "We have a cooperative edge there."

Arienza added that some 60 to 80 percent of films she applied for amusement tax rebates from the Quezon Production Board (QPB) were graded.

Ten of these are deemed eligible for grading. An "E" grade entitles a movie to a 100-percent tax rebate; a "B" fetches a 60-percent rebate.

Improved products

"The it reflective of the fact that Filipino films are improving," Arienza explained. "Moreover, producers are clearly approaching changes in the tastes, which has become more sophisticated, requiring better quality products."

He added, "This is why box-office returns of P100 million or more have become common."

Gaby Garcia Mallari's "One More Chance," Maryo J. delos Reyes' "A Love Story" and Mario Dacanay "Sana Ngayon Na" were some of the films that earned more than the P100 million mark this year, sources said.

At the Cinemas

Glorietta 1	1 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	2 Banay Kubo	3 Enteng Kabisote 4	4 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo		
Glorietta 4	1 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	2 Enteng Kabisote 4	3 Enteng Kabisote 4			
	4 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	5 Banay Kubo	6 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	7 Resiklo		
Greenbelt 1	1 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	2 Enteng Kabisote 4				
Greenbelt 2	1 Enteng Kabisote 4	2 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo				
	3 Resiklo	4 Banay Kubo	5 Shake, Rattle & Roll X			
Alabang Town Center	1 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	2 Enteng Kabisote 4				
	3 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	4 Banay Kubo	5 Resiklo			
Ayala Center Cebu	1 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	2 Banay Kubo	3 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	4 Enteng Kabisote 4		
Market! Market!	1 Enteng Kabisote 4	2 Resiklo				
	3 Banay Kubo	4 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	5 Shake, Rattle & Roll X			
Trinoma	1 Resiklo	2 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	3 Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo	4 Enteng Kabisote 4		
	5 Banay Kubo	6 Shake, Rattle & Roll X	7 Enteng Kabisote 4			

At the Malls

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See mall for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. EZ-686, Series of 2007. November 15 to December 31, 2007

Greenbelt — Christmas Gift Box Promo. Get a FREE gift box for a minimum purchase of P1,000 at any Greenbelt mall tenant. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. EZ-690, Series of 2007. December 1 to 31

Alabang Town Center — Shop and Experience Merry Promo. Get a chance to win the Grand Prize of a brand new Isuzu Sportivo. For details, Per DTI-NCR Permit No. EZ-642, Series of 2007. November 2 to December 31

Ayala Center Cebu — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See mall for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 184, Series of 2007. December 1 to 31

Market! Market! — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See mall for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. EZ-690, Series of 2007. December 1 to 31

Cinema 76 — Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE. January 11 to 27, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-9170. or visit www.repertory-philippines.com

Ayala Museum — ENTER THE MUSEUM by Jerome Kuan. November 21 to January 13, 2008, Ground Floor Gallery. For more info, pls. call 757-0107 to 09 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

Tri Noma — FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See mall for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. EZ-636, Series of 2007. December 1 to 31

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Fun Snaps from 2007

TWO FACES OF ILLES

Artista and her diplomat husband Omar Ilustre cross-cultural marriage extends to the kitchen. "We cook together," they told us in March. Now, she has couple is bound for Madrid, his next post. Meanwhile, quite by chance (before), HOLMES Entertainment bumped into Dimitri Nasrawi and Mia Pia a Egyptian tourist, who's the cooking queen was saying a TV show to Mag. It took Bole cruising for the lot to lure it up for Marisol Cruz's camera.

imagine freedom from wires

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P2

S9

T10

SAMSUNG

Now On Disc

'Shrek The Third'

ONCE UPON A time, an ogre lived in an enchanted castle.

The story continues as Magnavision Home Video presents "Shrek The Third" on VCD and DVD.

When Shrek (narrated Owen, the last thing he wanted was to rule the far things (but when his frog-in-law King Harold) suddenly croaks, Shrek is hired for the answer.

Lending their voices to the animated film are Mike Myers (Shrek), Eddie Murphy (Donkey), Antonio Banderas (Puss in Boots) and Cameron Diaz (Fiona-Ogre).

'1408'

Renowned horror novelist Mike Enslin (John Cusack) believes ghosts only in what he sees with his eyes.

But things change when he checks into room 1408 of the notorious Dolphin Hotel for his latest project.

Defying the warnings of hotel manager Olin (Samuel L. Jackson), the author becomes the first to occupy what is known as a haunted room.

"1408," a Stephen King adaptation, is directed by Swedish action director Mikael Hafstrom.

'Rogue Assassin'

After his partner is brutally murdered by the infamous assassin Rogue Liu Li, FBI agent Jack Crawford (Jason Statham) vows to find the elusive killer and avenge his partner's death.

But Rogue proves unstoppable until Crawford tries to ignite a "shoot 'em" war between Chinese mob leader Chang (John Lone) and Japanese Yakuza boss Shin (Ryo Ishibashi). Also starring: Devon Aoki and Lateef Crowson.

'Surf's Up'

Teenage hotshot penguin Cody Maverick, up-and-coming surfer, enters his first competition.

Cody believes winning will bring him the admiration and respect he desires until he comes face-to-face with a washed-up old surfer named Geek and discovers what a true winner really is.

"Surf's Up" features the voices of Jeff Bridges (Big Z and Geek), Jonny Depp (Reggie), Jon Heder (Chicken Joe), Mia Lahood (Cody).

'Beyonce Experience'

Sony BMG Music Entertainment has released "The Beyonce Experience Live" (SM), which captures the music and thrills of the singer's 2007 world concert tour.

ENTERTAINMENT

Expecting, now engaged

LOS ANGELES—ACTRESS Jessica Alba, 26, has gotten engaged to her boyfriend, producer Cash Warren.

Alba had announced earlier this month that she is pregnant.

"I was ecstatic that they are engaged," Alba's publicist, Brad Cornell, told The Associated Press Thursday. AP

Desperately seeking 'Burlesk Queen'

VILMA Santos says this movie changed her career direction.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

HAILED BY SOME CRITICS AS A MODERN Filipino movie classic, "Burlesk Queen" is also something of a Holy Grail for film enthusiasts.

According to urban legend, a copy of "Burlesk Queen" was inexplicably lost after a storage room in the Manila Film Center was flooded following heavy rains sometime in the 1980s.

Film archivist Teddy Co, however, told Inquirer Entertainment that the last known copy of "Burlesk" had been damaged "in a film laboratory's warehouse, not at the MFC, but also because of a sudden downpour."

Pinoy film classic located in Germany

Co said, "Film archives have three known enemies: flood, fire and war. That's why we have concerned very few films from the 1930s and 1940s."

But Celso Ad. Castillo's "Burlesk Queen" is a fairly recent movie. It was the controversial bankable winner in the hotly contested 1977 Metro Manila Film Festival.

In a recent interview with Inquirer Entertainment, Castillo corrected the impression that his film was "lost forever."

"I was told by [producer] Manny Vargas that a copy was found in Germany," Castillo said. "And I heard that the current owner has a high asking price. Maybe he is aware of the film's importance."

Nicky Deocampo, the president of the Philippine Motion Pictures Producers Association (PMPPI), confirmed that he had heard of an existing copy of "Burlesk" in Europe.

"Mowelfund was tasked to recover it years after its producer, Inc/Rec Productions, sold it abroad in the late 1970s," Nicky related.

Nick Deocampo, Mowelfund director, informed Inquirer Entertainment that "Burlesk Queen" is available on VCD. "But it's blurry," he said, "made from a Betamax copy."

He also said that Mowelfund had issued "negative and print copies" to the present owners, Mowfund Denmark, based in Frankfurt, Germany.

DESPERATELY 11

To have and to hold

A diary comic by CARLO J. CAPARAS

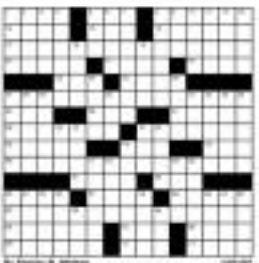
Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA

DAILY CROSSWORD

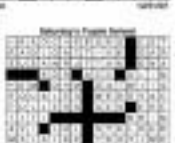
ACROSS
1 Wisenheimer
5 Hemlock
10 Lasso
14 Ow
15 Heck
16 Unsolicited opinions
17 Something odd
18 Pickles in brine
19 Ireland
20 English county
21 Rest, case of
23 Ms.
24 Mainframes, brothers
27 Something new
30 Actress Stern
31 Unfair to drive out
37 Well-liked adult
38 Italian wine name
41 Wrapped thin mister
43 Yesterday, Renoir, Morgan
44 Balkan lake
45 Saint Lawrence
46 Overwhelming homeward
51 Hurriedly
52 Author of lyrics
53 Cranky
54 Tense moment
55 Something short
56 Lake owner (abbr.)
57 Gay Gabbler
58 Lush Cache
59 Snitched
60 Mid-morning courses
61 Cereals that contain Mg

DOWN
1 Ad lapse
2 Nonchalant person
3 Schoolyard
4 Credit to a course
5 Links
6 Kitchen utensils
7 Art smocking
8 Big mammal
9 Hurricane Lucas
10 Jacket
11 Movie genre
12 Actress Hagerty
13 Hummer (Dorothy Gish's sister)
21 Personal (perhaps)
22 Backbone
24 Bedeviled
25 Boundary
26 Hawaiian porches
28 Actor Bruce
29 Last American president
32 Putin's "Master of Fortune" partner
33 Not well-off (abbr.)
34 Charge for overdue books
35 Hard-hat site (abbr.)
36 Christopher of "Mayerling"
39 Church leader
40 Brilliant bluish green
42 Hit the road
47 Wrestler Hogan
48 Lady Macbeth, e.g.
49 Natural rocks
50 Dividend
51 Lincoln and Lee
52 Duplex, e.g.
54 Copyright mark
55 Comic Kovacs
56 Carte ___
57 Dr. Seuss's Mr.
58 Birds in barns
59 Contract in wrinkles
60 Pro Bowl
61 Decades
62 Historical comments

By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL



Saturday's Puzzle Solved



HOROSCOPE

THE GOOD TIDES: You truly appreciate beauty in the world. You have artistic sensibilities, and whatever you do, you do carefully. You have a deep appreciation for nature. You like to be outdoors. You are sensual and surely not the last. Most of you have excellent taste. Now you should ought for one of the best years of your life. Bravo! Yay!

Birthdays of Anthony Hopkins, actor; George Bernard Shaw, playwright; author.

BORN TODAY Jan. 31 is April Fri. 30th. Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You're feeling a little down today, but don't worry, it won't last long. Tomorrow is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21) You're feeling a little down today, but don't worry, it won't last long. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19) You're feeling a little down today, but don't worry, it won't last long. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20) Be careful with your words today, as they can make you have to eat them later. Tomorrow is a good day to start that diet you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Saturday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories. Sunday is a good day to start that exercise routine you've been talking about. Try no more than 1,000 calories.

CONCEPTA SUDOKU

Concepta Sudoku

By Dave Green

4	6			7			3	2
5	8			2			9	7
			5	9				
		6	2				8	
	1	5				3	2	
	3				9	7		
				4	2			
6	2			3			1	5
9	4			1			6	8

Difficulty Level ★

HOW TO PLAY SUDOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

7	2	3	6	4	1	9	8	5
6	5	4	3	8	9	7	1	2
8	9	1	5	7	2	3	6	4
2	6	9	1	5	4	8	5	7
3	7	5	8	6	8	2	4	1
4	1	8	2	3	7	6	5	9
5	8	2	4	9	3	1	7	6
9	4	7	8	1	6	5	2	3
1	3	6	7	2	5	4	9	8

Desperately seeking. . .

Dreamscape resulted then, a few years back, Dranreb had asked Mowelfund for "visceral crip hendrow class stickers" so teeny of the reside could be negotiated in Manila.

"It was a reasonable request," Dreamscape noted, "but no one picked it up, and the deal fell through."

Could "Barkid" ever soon home?

Castillo certainly hopes so.

The film is consistently aloof on adult TV,he said, "But watching it on the big screen is a completely different experience."

Just as optimistic about the "Barkid" received is to lead star Batangas Gov. Vilma Santos.

"'Barkid' is one of my favorite movies," she said. "It was a turning point in my career. From my pa sweet image, I dared become a more serious actress."

OPENS TOMORROW

COMGUILD Production Co.

OFFICIAL ENTRY TO THE 2007 METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

THOU SHALT NOT KILL

BANAL

CHRISTOPHER DE LEON PABLO CORTES ALFRED VARGAS

SM CINEMA

movietime SHOWTIME

Your life as a movie

Celebrate New Year at SM Cinema with the stars of

RESIKLO

Jennylyn Mercado, Benjie Paras, Bryan Revilla, Jojo Revilla

Meet and Greet activity on December 30 (Sunday) at the following SM Cinema branches:

North EDSA, 1:00 p.m.
Megamall, 3:00 p.m.
Manila, 5:00 p.m.
Mall of Asia, 7:00 p.m.

An official entry in the 33rd Metro Manila Film Festival Philippines

NOW SHOWING AT ALL SM CINEMAS NATIONWIDE

RESIKLO

PG-13

OPENS JANUARY 8

GET ENCHANTED!

Her Seven Dorks

Life is a Fairy Tale.

Amanda Bynes Sara Paxton

Sydney White

...and The Seven Dorks.

Cash sa Petikula
Doble Panalo sa
SM Cinema

Non-stop music tonight at Eastwood

EASTWOOD CITY's "NEW Year's Countdown to 2008" tonight features The Members playing 1970s rock 'n' roll at 8 p.m.; The Bloodshields mixer proving 1960s golden hits at 7:15 p.m.; Richard Poon singing 1950s classics at 8 p.m.; Latin soul hot sound of eleven-tive rock at 10 p.m.; and The Sage Band's 1980s new wave sounds at 11:30 p.m.

The countdown with fireworks display and laser lights show is set at 12 midnight. Followed by a street party with the band Brigada and DJ Vhong's sambo and house remix.

All shows will be held at the Eastwood City Central Plaza in Libis, Quezon City.

Manny Lopez, Hyperbeat at Manila Pen

The Lobby New Year's Eve Gala Ball and Dinner tonight at the Manila Peninsula hotel with host/Kenny Lopez and his band along with Hyperbeat from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m.

Call 8872888 or 8123456.

Tribe of Levi at Bellevue

Tribe of Levi will play pop, R&B and dance music at the New Year's Eve countdown tonight at the 2F/2F bar of Bellevue Hotel, Alabang.

Opera at Hyatt Manila

The Philippine Opera Company, featuring classically trained talents dubbed The Three Waltzes, Three Tenors and Opera Belles, performs tonight at the Hyatt Hotel and Casino Manila. Call 8451234.

Limmlee in Boracay

The Limmlee band plays tonight at Discovery Shores, Boracay.

Call 8203 2889/688.

SHOW TIME

'Evening with the Masters'

Pianist Eholis Grace Vega, a music conservatory scholar in Vienna, interprets Chopin, Haydn, Beethoven and Schubert, among others in the classical concert "An Evening with the Masters" on Jan. 12, 7 p.m. and 7:30 p.m. at the Word Community Church, 102 Gen. Henry Javier St., Brgy. Ocampo, Pasig City (near Ultra and Valle Verde Country Club). Call 910-8777 (office hours), 0917-8291326 (Globe) and 0917-5399623 (Lani).

TRIBE of Levi